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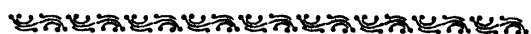
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Half the Seas Over



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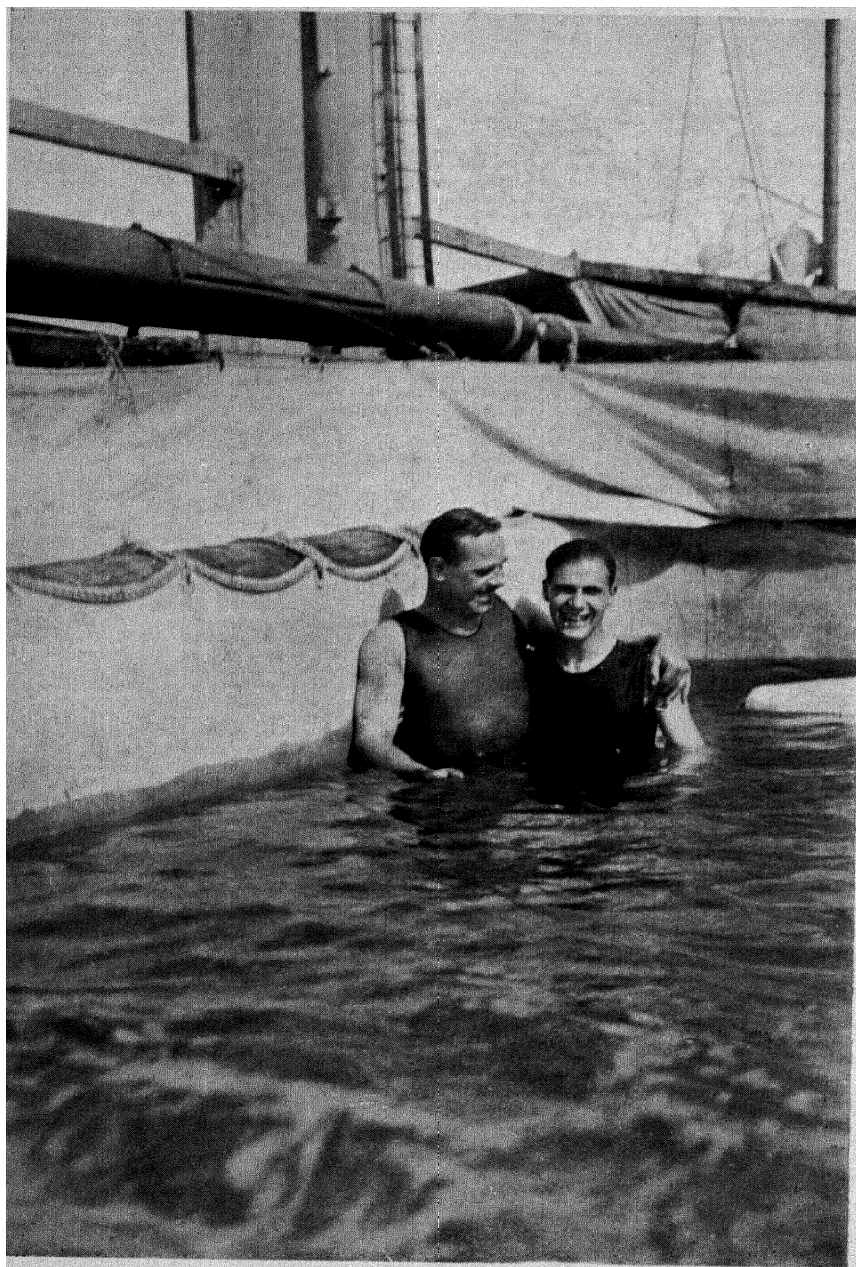
CLIFFORD W. COLLINSON



Life and Laughter 'Midst the Cannibals

and

Cannibals and Coconuts



George and the author (left).



Half the Seas Over

by

CLIFFORD W. COLLINSON



WITH 64 ILLUSTRATIONS AND 12 MAPS

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Half the Seas Over

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST STAGE

A CYNIC once remarked that the true call of the East was, "Boy! bring me a *stengeh*"—a *stengeh* being a whisky-and-soda. Well, that is a spirituous call, of course, but there is, too, a very real spiritual call, as many of us who have lived on the fringes of civilization know only too well.

Sometimes, as I sit in my office in the Strand, with the roar of London's traffic in my ears, I hear the faint hoot of a steamer's siren on the river, and then—why, then I am back once more on my coconut plantation in the Solomons, and the Sydney steamer is sliding slowly from behind the palms with a feather of white steam fluttering at her funnel; the cock-a-doodle-doo of her siren comes echoing from the green hills; the parakeets whirl and scream, and all the black boys are yelling: "Sit-eamer he come! Sit-eamer he come!"

Then the 'phone rings—wrong number—and I am back in the office once more. Ah, well!

It is the fashion—and by no means difficult nowadays—to travel widely, and the fact that one has visited foreign countries is not so remarkable as it used to be. Gone are the days when the intrepid schoolmarm spent an adventurous fortnight in Boulogne, and came back apologizing for being unable to speak anything but broken English.

Most of us long to travel. However staid and stodgy

we may appear to be, there is the spark of adventure in all of us. It is something that belongs to our inmost life—to the thoughts we never share—that almost overwhelming longing that comes to us sometimes to tear ourselves out of the rut into which we have settled, to start all afresh, to adventure forth into this wonderful old world of ours and go a-wandering—

For to admire and for to see,
For to be'old this world so wide.

It is the protest of romance against the commonplace of life.

.

There is, of course, a world of difference between the man who makes his home in foreign lands and the superficial globe-trotter who merely chases through on his way to somewhere else. But it is obvious that, for the dweller in foreign parts to reach the far places of the earth, he must do a certain amount of "globe-trotting" first, and, having already told in another place* of my life and doings in the Solomon Islands, I propose in the following pages to relate the story of how I got there, and of what befell upon the way.

Looking back to first causes, I realize that the whole thing began at the Club when I happened to mention quite casually to my friend George that I owned a half-share in a wheat farm on the prairie-lands of Saskatchewan, and that I had half a mind to go and have a look at it.

"Well, if you do," replied George promptly, "I've half a mind to come with you!"

That was how it all started—but when, some few weeks later, we actually set forth together, the first modest idea of a trip to Canada had enlarged itself and developed until my prairie farm was to be merely a brief halting-place on a wander round the world.

We made no definite plans in advance; George was very firm about that.

* See *Life and Laughter 'midst the Cannibals*.

"We'll just mosey along from place to place as the spirit moves us," said George, "and if someone ups and says: 'You ought to go and see so-and-so', we'll jolly well go and see it—if we feel like it. And," he added, "we'll travel light—just a small trunk and a suitcase apiece. We'll buy as we go. Razor-blades, and socks with holes in them, we'll chuck overboard."

Our first definite objective was to be a certain lumber camp on a tributary of the Ottawa River, and this, not so much on account of its intrinsic interest, but because one of George's friends had a financial interest in it and wanted us to have a look at it on his behalf.

Of our actual start on a morning in September, and of the crossing to New York, there is little of interest to relate, for the voyage was such a brief one and the floating hotel on which we travelled so enormous that, by the time we had learnt how to reach our cabin without enquiring the way, the *Aquitania* was sliding past that ironic gift of France to America—the Statue of Liberty.

New York itself did not delay us long either. We had both been there before and found it, as usual, maddeningly noisy. The "L" still thundered and crashed overhead, trams clanged and hissed along the streets, thousands of "automobiles" whizzed and hooted in every direction, and everybody was in a hurry.

It was all very interesting but also very tiring, and a night or two later George flopped down on his bed in our hotel and said, "Me for the lumber camp!" I, too, felt very much like that, and so next evening found us buying our railway tickets—long strips like newspaper cuttings—and making our way to the Central Station.

The terminal stations in New York are like cathedrals for size—enormous and stately buildings where you may not even smoke—and so awe-inspiring and magnificent was the Grand Central Terminal that George said he felt as if he ought to remove his hat. Common railway trains with their dirty habits are not allowed inside these termini at all. Passengers have to go down a long subway to the train-sheds, and there they find the coaches drawn

up alongside the platform, with coon porters in red jackets dodging about amongst the steam like demons in a pantomime. The engines carry a large bell, too, which swings to and fro, and, as our heavy train began to rumble out of the long shed into the night, this bell went "Clang-clang! Clang-clang!"—a most mournful sound—until we left the great city and its level crossings behind.

At Buffalo, at the northern end of Lake Erie, we had to change trains from the American to the Canadian systems, and since Buffalo is quite close to Niagara Falls we decided to break our journey and see them.

Now Americans like us to think that the "Niagara Falls" belong exclusively to them—being one of those things that they can do so much better than the old and effete British Empire. But this is not so, of course. There are two falls, a spit of land named Goat Island dividing the river into two portions just on the very brink of the drop. One half of the river falls on the American and the other half on the Canadian side of the borders, and these two mighty cascades, after their tumble, unite again below to form the famous Rapids.

You can do all kinds of interesting and exciting things at Niagara. You can descend to the foot of the falls and go aboard a tiny steamer, aptly named the *Maid of the Mist*, which takes you quite close up to where the falling rivers come roaring down out of the skies. Or, which is even still more exciting, you can don mackintoshes and sou'-westers and creep, like George and I did, right under the very lip of the falls into the Cave of the Winds, and, with your back to the dripping rocks, watch the millions of tons of water come thundering down in front of you in a solid liquid wall, whilst the savage whirlwind plucks and tears at your oilskins.

After a day spent amongst the fascinations of Niagara Falls, both George and I were glad to creep, very tired and sleepy, into the train which was to take us to Ottawa and the Canadian lumber camp.



CHAPTER TWO

THE LUMBER CAMP

IN Canada, and south of the barren and treeless North, there are two main forest regions—the Eastern and the Western. Between the two lie the great plains and the prairies, and this part of Canada is almost without trees at all. The original Eastern forests have now almost disappeared. Long ago there used to be great forests of elm trees and oaks, maple and beech trees, but these have been felled by lumber companies and destroyed by forest fires, until now hardly any great areas of timber country are left. But even so, there were plenty of trees round and about the lumber camp on the tributary of the Ottawa River in the Province of Quebec, at which George and I finally arrived one late September afternoon.

Imagine a small clearing in the forest with three large buildings and three smaller ones, all built of heavy logs, roofed with planks, and lighted only by one or two windows apiece. The largest building was the cook-camp, or eating-house. At one end of it were two cooking ranges and a couple of bunks placed one above the other, whilst along one side ran a broad table-shelf piled up with tinned foods, bread, cookies and pies. In the centre of the room there were four long wooden tables, with benches on each side, and with pots of sugar and salt set at intervals down the middle. This was where the woodsmen ate their breakfasts and suppers; their midday meal was brought to them at their work.

The sleeping-houses were smaller buildings, and

lined on two sides by a double tier of large bunks partitioned off from each other like the cabins on a ship. In the middle was a huge stove, always kept nearly red-hot, and with a network of thin poles over the top of it for the men to dry their clothes on.

It was in the boss's house, a small log building on one side of the clearing, that George and I slept and were fed.

On the first morning after our arrival—it seemed the middle of the night, for the stars were still glittering in a blue-black sky—I was awakened by a tremendous clanging. Scrambling out of bed, I huddled on a few clothes and sallied forth to see what it was all about, along with the boss, who was already fully dressed. George, of course, remained sunk in swinish slumber, for it would take an earthquake to awaken him at that unearthly hour. Besides, even if he had wakened, he would have refused to get up, because he maintains that the world is never in a fit state to look at before nine a.m., if then.

I emerged into the frosty starlight and perceived Cookie—except for the boss, the most important man in the camp—pounding away on a steel triangle that hung outside the long low log-building where the men were fast asleep and snoring.

“Roll out there! Roll out!” roared the boss, and one by one the men grunted and stirred and began to dress. They struggled into their heavy pants and “mackinaws”—heavy blanket coats with a loud check pattern—pulled on their heavy grey socks and, finally, their high boots—these studded with quarter-inch spikes on soles and heels. Blundering about in the cold darkness, they stung themselves to life with a wash-down in ice-cold water, and then made for the camp-house and breakfast.

And what a breakfast! Great dishes of porridge—the cookie called it “mush”—bacon and eggs, toast, pancakes, maple syrup, piles of bread—and gallons of hot tea with enormous quantities of sugar in it. Great hulking fellows these woodsmen were, and the piles of food melted away like snow in sunshine. There was practically

no conversation; they just got on with the job of eating. But by and by they finished and were ready to commence work, although even now it was only four o'clock, and the stars were still shining above the trees.

The men worked in gangs, and each gang had its own boss and its own special job. The most important were the axe-men, who felled the trees and cut them into logs. This was expert work, and the cutters chose their axes and attended to them with the very greatest care.

There is a certain knack in tree-felling which only long experience and practice can give, and later on during the same morning, when George had struggled out of bed, we went and watched these axe-men at work. Two of them stood facing each other at the foot of a tremendous pine tree, and took it in turn to strike at the same spot. The powerful strokes fell just as regularly as the ticking of a clock, and each stroke was placed to a hair's-breadth. When they had chopped out a deep V-shaped gash on the side where they wanted the tree to fall, they abandoned their axes and attacked it from the opposite side with a crosscut saw. Steadily to and fro went the ribbon of steel, every now and then paraffin being squirted on the blade to make it run more sweetly. The outer edge of the saw sank deeper and deeper until it disappeared altogether, and when this happened they took a sledge-hammer and drove a steel wedge into the outer edge of the crack made by the sawing. This was to keep the crack open and prevent the weight of the tree from pinching the saw-blade. When the saw had reached a spot within an inch or two of the V-shaped gash made by their axes on the other side, they drove in another and thicker wedge. Then one of them sang out "Timber!" and all the men near at hand stopped work and dodged away. But nothing happened—the tree still stood firm. Approaching cautiously, therefore, they sawed a few additional strokes until, suddenly, it gave forth a big "crack" like a pistol-shot, upon which one man unhooked his saw-handle, whilst the other coolly drew the blade through the bole and out the other side.

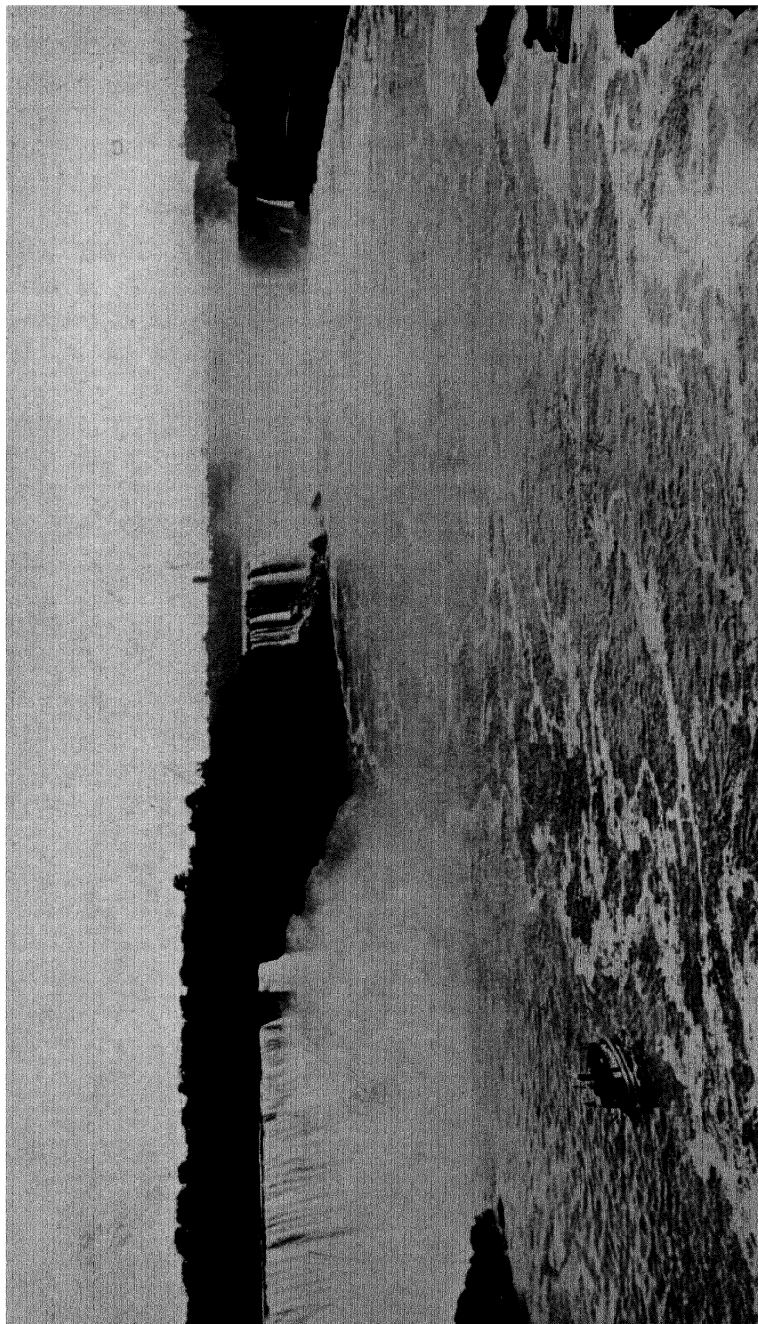
All eyes were now on the great tree. First it shivered from top to bottom and every leaf and twig rustled and shook. Then it leaned over ever so slightly and began to fall, at first very slowly, but quickly gathering speed and finally rushing towards the earth with a roar, tearing through the branches of other trees, bending the stoutest and breaking the slender ones, and at last hitting the ground with a tremendous crash and filling the air with a fog of small twigs and pine needles. The felling of a huge tree is one of the most impressive sights, and even old woodsmen shout with the sheer excitement of it. It is sad, too, to see a great tree die.

The work of the axe-men being completed, another gang took charge. Their job was to trim the trunk of the fallen tree of all its branches, and this called for skilful axe-work too. The branches had to be shaved off close and clean, but at the same time the trunk must not be gashed.

Now this particular tree was at least half a mile from the immense clearing or "yard", as they call it, where the trolley cars waited to run the logs down to the river, and George and I wondered how on earth they were going to drag this thirty tons of timber over the intervening distance.

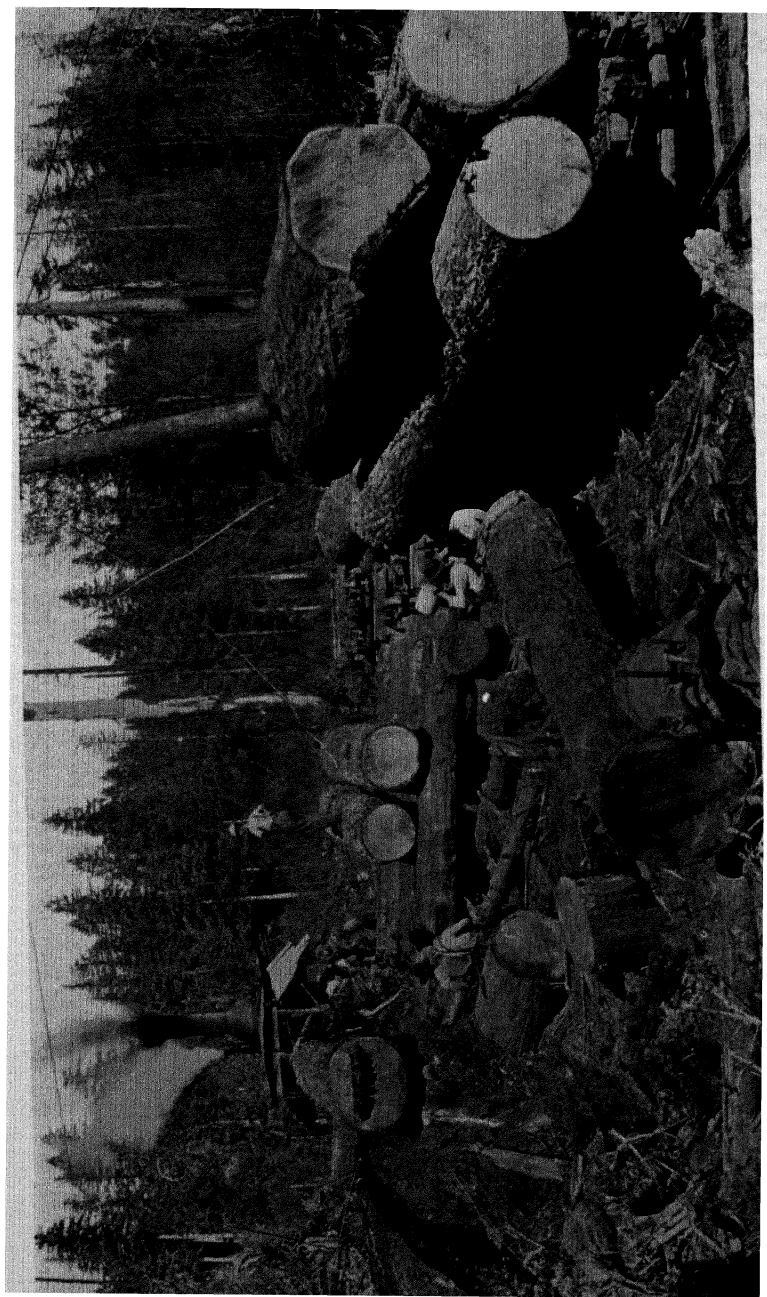
We had noticed two small but powerful vertical engines in the yard, and also, in the very centre, a magnificent tree, cleared of all its branches and rising like a massive column. All the rest of the yard was dotted by tree-stumps two or three feet high, but this solitary king of the forest had been left standing alone in the middle. To the very top of it was fastened a big pulley through which ran a stout wire rope which, in turn, was wound round a drum on one of the stationary engines.

When the fallen tree had been shorn of its branches, some men led this wire rope to where it lay and fastened it round one end of the trunk very securely. Then, all being ready, the foreman, waving George and me to a place of safety, gave the signal to start hauling. The engine, half a mile away, revolved the drum, the wire rope tautened and trembled, and very slowly the



"You can do all kinds of interesting things at Niagara."

see page 14)



QUEBEC.

"Where the trolley-cars waited

(see page 18)

massive trunk began to move forward in little jerks. It seemed alive! It rose up on end, it leaped straight into the air, it rolled to and fro, and now and again, with a sudden vicious sideswipe, it swept round like a scythe. But all the time, struggle and kick as it might, that tree moved steadily forward towards the clearing, until it finally came to rest in the yard.

When the felled tree is too far away from the yard for the wire rope to deal with it, teamsters are employed, with their horses, their little wooden sledges, their steel chains and their tongs. But in this case the tree-trunk is first sawn into short lengths varying from twelve to eighteen feet. The teamsters' horses are simply marvellous. They know their job just as well as their drivers. They can pull a great log as heavy as an iron safe over the rough ground, dodging the stumps and snaking it through the bush with nothing but a low word of direction and advice now and then from the teamster. Stepping care fully, the horse draws the log to the banks of the river, where it is piled along with those from the yard, ready to tip into the water when spring comes.

And so the work went on all day, save for a short break for the hasty midday meal.

When dusk fell the men came tramping home again, glad enough to catch sight of the bright lights shining through the trees. Then supper! There is no appetite in the world like that of a lumberman. All day he has been working hard in the keen air amongst the sweet-smelling pine trees, and he is simply ravenous. The piles of baked pork and beans, canned beef, fish, rice, jam, bread and butter, washed down with gallons of heavily sweetened tea, rapidly disappeared.

After supper the men lounged about in the stuffy bunkhouse for an hour or two, smoking, telling yarns and playing cards, and then they turned into their bunks and slept like the logs they had been handling all day.

Early in April the ice on the river begins to thaw and float away, and then comes the most exciting part

of the work. All along the banks, and on the ice itself, are piles of logs ready to float downstream as soon as the ice gives way—tens of thousands of logs all ready for the great drive.

A night comes when the boss sniffs the air and announces that the ice is going to break. Something in the wind, in the "taste" of the air, tells him that the big change is coming. And next morning proves him right. Down the river comes the flood of water, forcing the ice upwards and tearing it asunder into great flat cakes which rear up and tumble over and go tossing and grinding down the river.

The men set to work feverishly pushing the piled-up logs into the flood, and when at last all the logs are afloat, the "drive" begins. This "driving" means that the rivermen must follow the mass of logs tumbling in the current, and keep them all on the move. For now and then a jam occurs. At a narrow portion of the river a big log may suddenly get stuck broadside on against a rock, and in doing so block the traffic. Thousands of logs are coming down and adding to the pile every minute, and in no time a jam develops.

To free such a mass is a risky job indeed, and it is only veterans who dare tackle it. With spiked boots and a pole with a steel hook at the end of it, called a "peavie", these men spring from log to log, pulling here and pushing there, searching for the key log which, when shifted, will release all the rest. At last they find it and manage to move it a little bit. There follows an ominous heaving and creaking of the whole mass. Then the rivermen spring like lightning towards the river-bank, using their peavies as balancing-poles, dodging moving logs, leaping gaps, picking their way swiftly, like sure-footed cats, until they are safely ashore. Behind them, with a roar like thunder, the jam breaks and the head of it goes swiftly round the bend, until at last the logs are once more floating past calmly.

Mile after mile down the river and across the great lakes the logs drift along until, sometimes after months

of steady travelling, they reach the saw-mills. Here they are hauled up from the water and sliced into planks.

On our way back to Ottawa, George and I visited the firm's saw-mills and watched this process of plank-making. The piece of machinery that does the work is called a gang-saw, and we were fascinated with it. Thirty short, straight saws were set close together vertically in a frame, all jiggling up and down so fast that it was impossible to see the teeth at all. A huge tree-trunk was pushed steadily against these thirty saws, and in less than no time the enormous log was sliced into as many perfectly uniform planks.

The logs waiting to be dealt with at the saw-mills are kept floating in booms or harbours, and sometimes the rivermen hold a gala, and have what they call "birling" matches. George and I went to one. We went down to the river and sat on piles overlooking a patch of clear water in one of the booms. Some men with peavies rolled a white pine log about a foot and a half in diameter into the clear water, where it lay rocking three or four feet from the edge—not broadside, but end on, to the bank. Suddenly a riverman leapt clear into the air and landed with both feet square on the nearest end of the floating log. It dipped down ankle deep, but the other end rose, and the log, jerked forward by the shock of impact, shot right out into the middle of the little pond, whilst the man, with his arms folded and his knees bent like a circus-rider, stood upon it as motionless as a statue of bronze. Then, turning sideways, he slowly began to revolve the log with his feet. His body above the waist was perfectly still; only his legs and feet moved as he stepped forward, at first slowly, and then faster and faster until the revolving tree-trunk threw a spray of water a foot in the air. Then suddenly, slap! slap! he reversed his steps, and the log stopped dead.

Whilst this performance was proceeding, I noticed that George was becoming increasingly restless, and as the log came to a quivering standstill, his impatience overcame him. Leaping from his seat, he begged to be

allowed to try his hand—or rather his feet—at the game. Laughter and cries of encouragement spurred him on as the log was brought close to the bank, and George, giving his eyeglass a final twist, stepped gingerly out upon it.

Both George and the riverman stood sideways and faced in the same direction. The riverman began to twirl the log very slowly, and George's feet, uncertainly at first, but soon with gathering confidence, kept pace. He staggered a bit, but managed to keep upright. The riverman began to step more quickly, and George, with mounting enthusiasm, followed suit nimbly. He was very proud of himself; you could see it in his cocksure smile. He was so proud of himself, indeed, that he turned and waved triumphantly to me, and, at that very moment the riverman, with a twinkle in his eye, gave two sharp reverse stamps with his feet, stopped the log, and George shot forward into the pool as if he had been shied over a horse's head. It was too bad of the riverman, of course, but George asked for it, in a way. Anyhow, he was none the worse for the ducking.

Apparently it is only the big timber that is sliced up into planks. The smaller stuff, like spruce and balsam fir, is all torn up and made into wood pulp. They grind up the little trees, under steam pressure, into a kind of wood-paste, which, after passing over screens and between revolving cylinders, comes out finally as a smooth sheet of paper.

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Arriving back again in Ottawa, we stayed only long enough to secure the tickets for our journey westwards across the Continent to the farm in Saskatchewan in which I own a half-share. It is situated near a little prairie town named Jansen, in the Province of Saskatchewan, and I was naturally eager, not only to inspect the property itself, but also to renew acquaintance with my old friend Willie Wilson, the Yorkshire farmer whose emigration and farming adventure I had partly financed.

It was, therefore, with a pleasant feeling of anticipation that I paced the long platform with George beneath the lofty roof and sizzling arc-lights of Ottawa's fine railway station, waiting for "The Dominion", one of the two famous Canadian Pacific Railway Trans-Continental expresses which, starting from Montreal, run across Canada every day in the year.

Prompt to the minute, at nine-fifteen p.m., the enormous engine, with its tail of heavy coaches, rumbled into the station after its hundred-mile run from Montreal. Almost before it had stopped, the coon attendants, in their snow-white jackets, hopped down nimbly on the low platform carrying the little wooden steps, all pipe-clayed and trim, which they placed at the entrance-doors at the ends of each great coach.

George and I, escorted by the coon attendant, whose welcome exposed rows of snow-white teeth filling a mouth that smiled right back to his ears, entered the train and were shown, with many bows and "Yas-suhs", to our reserved places in the sleeper. Ten minutes later, prompt on time, the heavy train jerked and rolled forward out of the station on its 130-mile run to Chalk River, the next stop.



CHAPTER THREE

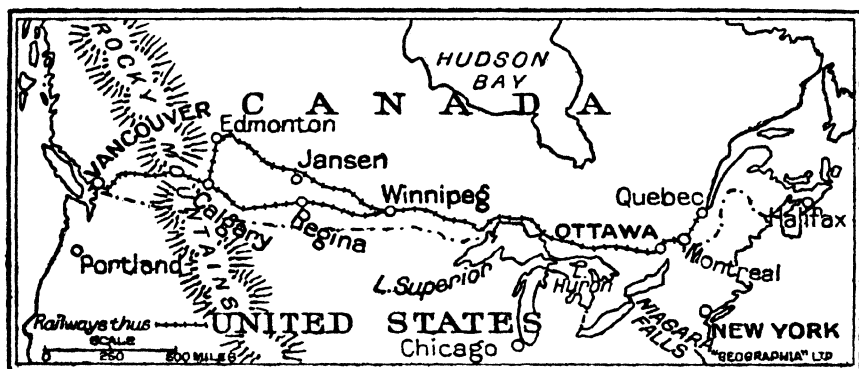
IN THE TRANS-CANADA TRAIN

A STANDARD sleeper on the Canadian Pacific Trans-Continental trains consists of a certain number of sections per coach—or car, as they are called in Canada. Each section consists of two pairs of seats facing each other. At night, the coloured porter in charge of the car converts this into a sleeping-berth by pulling forward the cushions of the seats so that they meet in the middle and form a bed. Then he lets down one side of the roof to form the upper berth, inserts headboards between each section, and fixes coat-hangers and clothes-nets. Finally he makes up both the upper and lower berths with pillows and bedclothes, hangs a heavy green curtain in front, and tells you you can go to bed. He does the same on the other side of the car, and all down the length of it, so that when he has finished there is a row of top and bottom berths along each side of the long coach and a narrow, dim-lit passage running down the centre between the swaying green curtains. To get into the top berth you use a small ladder.

George and I decided to turn in at once, and he chose the upper berth. One cannot undress in the passage, of course. For one thing, there isn't room, and for another, the occupant of the opposite berth may happen to be a lady. One must retire primly behind the curtain and disrobe whilst sitting up on the bed. This is not at all a simple matter.

George climbed the ladder into his upper berth, but,

in defiance of the conventions, sat on the edge with his feet hanging down and commenced to undress. He had reached a very critical stage indeed when a lady suddenly poked her head through the curtains immediately facing him across the passage. Two things then happened simultaneously. The lady screamed and hurriedly withdrew her head, whilst George, badly scared and covered with shame—and but little else—clashed his curtains together and tumbled backwards into that obscurity from which he ought never to have emerged. The remainder of his undressing took place behind the screen, accompanied, however, by a great deal of smothered



TRANS-CANADA ROUTE

profanity and a series of upheavals which made me fear that the spring-mattress above my head would collapse and bring him down on top of me. It bulged and heaved and creaked in a most ominous manner.

The spasms subsided little by little, however, until the only remaining problem was what he was to do with his boots. He wanted to leave them out for the coon to clean, but couldn't reach the floor and didn't dare to drop them from such a height. Finally he lowered them down carefully on the crook of his umbrella, and got me to unhook them. The next morning George rose early, and did most of his dressing in the large washroom at the rear of the coach. At breakfast in the dining-car he asked me,

in a troubled voice, if I thought the lady of the night before would be able to recognize him. "Well, it's quite possible, George," I said, "seeing that you are the only fellow on the train wearing plus-fours." "Oh, that's all right then!" said George with a happy smile, "I wasn't!"

All day long the train carried us steadily through a rather wild and deserted-looking landscape, sparsely settled and sometimes quite heavily timbered, whilst several times we roared over trestle bridges spanning small but rapid rivers that came tumbling down from the north to join Lake Huron, which lay out of our sight to the south. George and I read books and looked out of the wide windows, ate an enormous lunch, and then dozed in the afternoon to waken up and find, when dinner-time came at seven p.m., that on the left-hand side of the train was a great sheet of water. We were skirting the shores of Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water in the world—as large as Ireland, in fact. Its horizon is like that of the sea, and its waves, on occasion, just as angry and destructive. The railway track curved and swung round the coastline of this enormous lake, through rock cuttings and over rumbling bridges until, at about bedtime, we reached Fort William with its towering grain elevators.

George was poring over the time-table and I could see that he was bothered about something. He took his eye-glass out and polished it, and screwed it back again into his face—and with George this is always an infallible symptom of mental disorder. Finally he exclaimed:

"Look here, old man, how on earth does this train manage to leave Fort William forty minutes before it arrives?"

"What?" I said.

"How does this train—well, look here at the time-table. 'Fort William—arrive 10.20 p.m. Fort William—depart 9.40 p.m.' What's this E.T. and C.T. at the side mean? Oh, here it is at the bottom. 'Fort William—going West, change from Eastern to Central time by

setting watch back one hour'. Towards the sunset . . . away from the sunrise . . . *back* one hour," mused George. "Yes, that's right," he cried, his eyes sparkling with unwonted intelligence; "we've been running away from the sunrise at the rate of fifty miles an hour, and now we've got to stop our watches for an hour to let the sunrise catch up with us."

It was so, of course, but it seemed queer. Certainly we had altered our watches when we crossed the Atlantic and reached New York, but we hadn't troubled to puzzle out the reason. I suppose we had accepted, without question, the fact that the time of day in a foreign country was naturally different from ours, just as the coinage and nearly everything else was different. But this bald timetable announcement seemed somehow to bring up the whole question of solar systems and interstellar space and Polar Equidistant Azimuthal Projections. It was a solemn moment.

George ordered a drink.

And so once more to our swaying beds and to sleep, whilst the great train still thundered on through the darkness, climbing steadily now towards the plateau of the Western Prairies.

Next morning, at nine a.m. to the minute by the great station clock, we rolled into Winnipeg, capital city of the Province of Manitoba, and headquarters of the wheat trade of all the vast regions to the North-East and the West.

We found that, in order to reach Willie's farm near Jansen, in Saskatchewan, we had to leave the Trans-Continental train at Winnipeg and change to a branch line taking a more northerly route. Consequently, after the coon attendant had flicked the dust of travel from our coats with his fibre whisk and a couple of dollars from our pockets with his irresistible grin, we hopped out and made straight for the Royal Alexandra Hotel for a bath and breakfast.

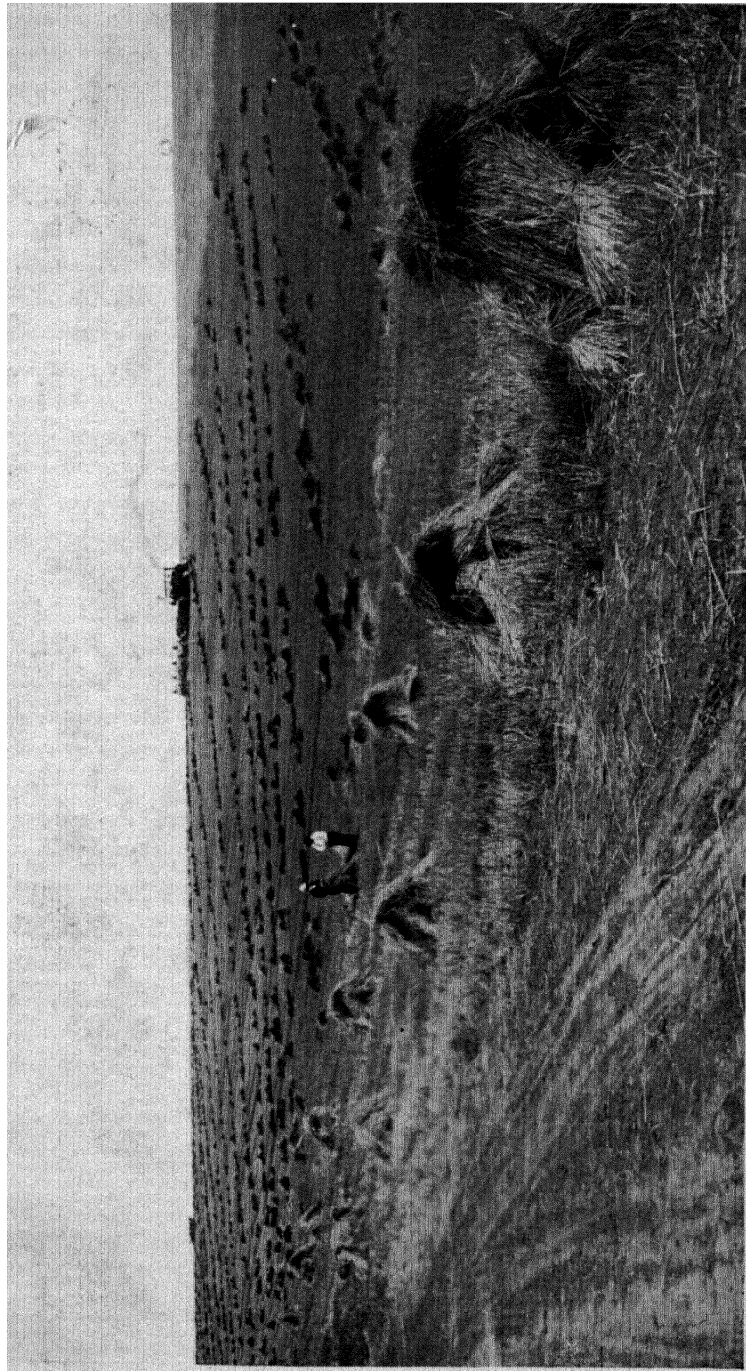
There is nothing we can teach the Canadian Pacific Railway about hotels. Spaciously conceived, palatially

designed, perfectly run, the accommodation and the service is all that one could possibly desire. After a hot bath and a leisurely breakfast, George sat back and announced that he felt like a bachelor millionaire—apparently his idea of the perfect state.

Our train was timed to leave at 11 p.m. that night, and was due at Jansen, Saskatchewan, at about noon next day, the distance being some 400 miles. We therefore had the whole day before us in Winnipeg, and in the afternoon we hired a car and drove round to see the sights. As we passed down the exceptionally broad Main Street, with magnificent buildings on either side and electric trams in the middle running along either side of a wide centre footway, and later saw some of the lovely homes on the outskirts, it was difficult to believe that less than fifty years ago Winnipeg was a mere trading post of the Hudson Bay Company, with a population of about 200. To-day there are something like a quarter of a million citizens. It is the distributing and receiving centre for all the necessities and the luxuries of life for the whole of Western Canada. A few days later, on the table in Willie Wilson's sitting-room, I was to see what is known throughout Canada as "The Prairie Bible"—a huge illustrated catalogue, as large as the London Telephone Directory before they divided it into two portions—containing within its pages prices and illustrations, many of them in colour, of every conceivable kind of merchandise, from steam-driven threshing machines to babies' rattles. It was issued by a Winnipeg house—Sears Roebuck was the name, I think—and no prairie homestead in all Canada lacks its copy—and its potential source of prompt and businesslike supply.

As midnight approached, George and I again entrained, this time in a sleeper in "The Great West Express" bound for Saskatoon and the North-West, and when morning came we found ourselves in the midst of the real Canadian Prairie.

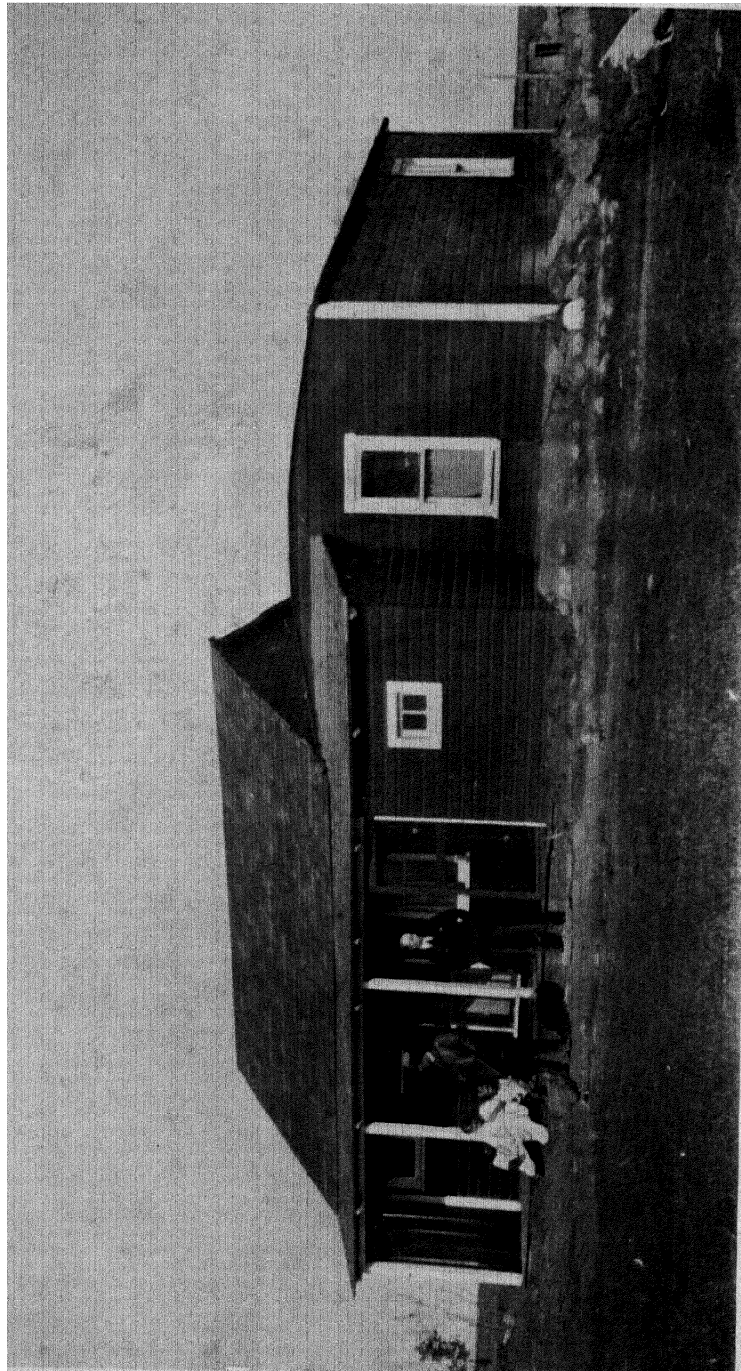
The great Central Plain of Canada, commencing in Manitoba and rising in altitude as it extends westwards



SASKATCHEWAN

" . . . rolling away endlessly to the sky-line—the flat prairie lands . . . "

(see page 29)



SASKATCHEWAN

" . . . the tiny and somehow gallant little wooden shack . . . "

(see page 30)

to the Rockies, consists of three prairie steppes or levels. The first, which we crossed during the night, is about 800 feet above sea-level and is as flat as a table-top. The second steppe, on which Willie's farm lay, is higher than the first, its height being about 1,600 feet. And it was over the surface of this higher platform that George and I speeded all next morning. I say "speeded", but there were innumerable stops at small and strangely-named prairie stations—in many cases just a low platform, a small wooden hut, and, perhaps, a grain silo—strung like beads on the single-track ribbon of shining steel which lay in a dead straight line from one horizon to the other. There are many queer place names in Canada—Czar, Mozart, Gladstone, Bowbells, Eyebrow, Spuzzum, Love, Hope, Resource, Zwicky, Battle Creek, Conquest, Sanctuary, Stranraer, Cupar, McNab, McTavish, Daphne, Darling, and so on—names reminiscent of who knows what past memories or future hopes in the minds of those who christened them.

On either side of the track, rolling away endlessly to the skyline, lay the flat prairie lands—wheat fields, prairie grass, more wheat, more prairie grass—hundreds of miles of it with scarcely a tree. The great cattle ranches, some as big as counties, that flourished when the Wild and Woolly West was young, are now no longer to be found in Saskatchewan. The ranch has given place to the farm, and the great herds, raised exclusively for beef, have been superseded by much more modest ones run by small farmers for dairying purposes. There are still a few ranches left, of course—and cowboys too—but you have to go back from the railway to find them. George met a thirsty cowboy on the train—a real "old-timer" he said he was—of whose ability to tell the tale for hours on end without pause I have never met the equal. George sat transfixed and spellbound as the ancient fraud spurred his imagination to wilder and wilder flights, and if I hadn't laid hands upon him and dragged him out bodily at Jansen he would, I think, have gone on listening until the train reached the Frozen North.

Willie Wilson, tanned and wall-eyed as ever, was awaiting us, and the long train rumbled away into the distance, leaving behind on the tiny platform not only George and myself, but also our cabin trunks, which we had never set eyes upon since "checking" them into the care of the railway company at Ottawa.

Willie's buggy, a flimsy-looking box-tray body mounted on four large and very spidery wheels, with an unshod and wall-eyed chestnut mare in the shafts—and I should like to say here that no other case of wall-eye occurred amongst Willie's family or dependents—was waiting outside, and, with our baggage aboard, we were soon rattling over the prairie on the six-mile drive to Poplar Farm. There was no road, of course, merely wheel-tracks in the grass faintly indicating the route, and the various pot-holes and inequalities of the ground soon showed me why the tall spidery wheels were a necessity, their circumference bridging, and not dropping into, even a fairly wide depression.

Being an old friend of Willie's I naturally sat with him in front, whilst George, perched amongst the luggage at the back, bounced about like a pea on a drum.

After about half an hour Willie pointed with his whip, and we saw, sticking up cheekily out of the prairie like a matchbox in the middle of a ballroom floor, the tiny and somehow gallant little wooden shack that spelt Home to Willie in the midst of all this level immensity.

Another half-hour and we arrived, to be welcomed warmly by Mrs. Wilson—"Ma" to both of us after the first five minutes—and greeted uproariously by Young Willie (12), Stewart ("Stewie", 10), Kathleen (9), Mary (8), three dogs and four cats (ages unknown), and "Hare-Hound" the hired hand, whose real name I never discovered.

With inevitable Yorkshire hospitality Ma had an enormous meal ready for us, but what befell us subsequently at Willie's farm must form the subject of another chapter.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE FARM ON THE PRAIRIE

THE farm belonging to Willie and myself consists of what is known in Saskatchewan as a "half section", namely, 320 acres. One quarter section, 160 acres, belongs to Willie and the other quarter to me. At the date of my visit 250 acres were under cultivation, and 170 acres of this had been broken out of the raw prairie by Willie himself during the previous four years. Of this 250 acres, 112 were wheat, 70 were summer fallow, and the remaining 68 acres were sown with oats and barley for purposes of feeding the horses and cows.

In breaking out the new prairie land Willie told me that he had adopted the following procedure. First, the ploughing, using five horses (three borrowed from neighbours) travelling abreast and dragging a plough making two twelve-inch furrows. He tackled this job annually about the first week in June, as soon as the frost was sufficiently out of the ground. All his ploughing had to be finished before the middle of July owing to the necessity for conserving the moisture and getting the turned sods well rotted down. He allowed the furrows to lie for about a month, and then commenced work with the disc harrow. The ground was usually gone over four times with this implement, and if time and horse-flesh were available, he went over it a further four times. According to the amount of labour put in Willie was getting yields of anything up to 50 bushels an acre, provided, of course, that the weather was kind and insect scourges were kept under control.

By the way, I hope the reader understands that I myself am no farmer, and that what is set down here is merely what I picked up during the many chats I had with Willie as we tramped the stubble with guns tucked under our armpits, and Floss, the retriever, questing about hopefully with nose to ground.

First, then, the insect pests. The two most destructive flies are the Hessian and the Saw. The Hessian fly attacks the grain when ripe and cuts the stalk clean in two at the very bottom. In a few days scores of acres can thus be destroyed. The Saw fly, however, attacks the stalk about half way up before it is ripe, and does not cut it in two. It gets inside the straw and apparently sucks the nature out of the stem, causing it to break with the result that the head then never fills.

Apart from insect scourges, the most dreaded enemy of the farmer are the hailstorms which sometimes come during, or after, excessive heat in July and August. Some of these storms are so violent that they literally beat and pound the standing crop into the earth, and even break and flatten down the stiff, wiry prairie grass. Will told me that they had had such a storm during the last week of the previous July, and that the hailstones fell so thickly that in one place he found a pile of them nine inches deep. Moreover, although five hours had elapsed since they fell, and the thermometer stood at ninety degrees in the shade, some of the stones were still as large as a hen's egg. He added that, in the district just north of Jansen, the harvests had been "hailed out" for four years in succession.

The climate in the Jansen district is open—blue skies and sunshine nearly all the year round. The really cold weather, with temperatures often down to 50 degrees below freezing point, sets in about the middle of November and usually holds until about the first or second week in April, when the great thaw begins. The snow, when it comes, is so incredibly fine that it is almost impossible to see that it is snowing at all, and, owing to its fineness, any tiny obstruction projecting above the dead level of the

prairie—even a little heap of straw—will cause a tremendous hummock of snow to collect. Round the house and outbuildings drifts gather which reach the roofs.

All but the deepest wells freeze up, water for the animals and for the house has to be obtained by melting lumps of snow, and the ground itself is frozen as hard as chilled steel to the depth of six feet and more. For this reason, when anyone dies, the relatives are faced with the same problem that worries the impulsive and improvident murderer, namely, the disposal of the body. If indeed a grave is dug at all, it has to be laboriously excavated with a pickaxe—a pebble of earth at a time. In many cases, however, the remains are placed in an outhouse and left for months—frozen, of course—until the thaw-out comes. Partly because of their isolated lives and, perhaps, partly because the various races that make up the Canadian farming fraternity cling to the customs of their countries of origin, many prairie funerals are made the occasion for great reunions. Owing to the limited number of rooms, the corpse, brought in from the outhouse, lies in the general room amongst all the relatives and friends and neighbours. It is dressed up in its best clothes with jewellery complete, and buried so—though without the jewellery. The wakes that follow frequently degenerate into something like an orgy.

If any of Will's family died, he, of course, would never dream of doing anything so indecent, but he explained to me that round about Jansen the bulk of the farmers are of a peasant type, many of them being foreigners—most of them, indeed, being the children of the lower class of emigrant. Their ideas of table manners and of the ordinary social decencies are practically non-existent, although, no doubt, the next generation will show an improvement.

At present it is a struggle for bare existence and there is no time for anything but work. The average settler obtains his quarter section on a deposit, and his subsequent harvests, if successful, go to pay for it. He buys his implements and stock on the instalment plan also,

so that the proceeds of his harvests for many years to come are mortgaged in advance. In spite of this, most farmers run a car, also on the hire-purchase system, long before they can really afford one, simply because their neighbour three miles away does so. When I went into Jansen later on I was amused to see the frequent notices, scrawled in almost illegible capital letters on a piece of cardboard—to be seen in most shops—"NO CREDIT!"

Wages are high. For instance, "Hare-Hound", the hired hand, was paid \$70 (at that time worth £14) a month, and received his keep and his washing and the use of the horse and buggy whenever he wanted it. A hired girl usually receives \$20 to \$30 a month, and every evening off if she wishes. She sits in the room with the family, who are also expected to entertain any of her followers who choose to drop in and see her.

As a matter of fact, Will told me that with the type of settler at that time in the district, the hired help, both man and girl, are actually of as good, and often of a better, class than their employers, but doubtless this will alter in course of time, and the difference of status between employed and employer will tend to become more strongly marked. It is hard, however, for a good-class English farmer to conform to this condition of affairs, and the result was that Will and Ma simply did without any local help and stuck to English customs with the help of "Hare-Hound," the handy man, whom they had brought out with them.

I see, on referring to my diary, that George and I reached Poplar Farm on October 2; and that the weather was becoming distinctly cold, especially after sunset. Night after night the mercury dropped to the 12 degree mark—20 degrees below freezing point. The accommodation in the shack was very limited, consisting only of a kitchen, a living-room and a bedroom. George and I occupied the bedroom, and where Willie and his progeny managed to find space in which to sleep was a puzzle to me and a matter of some concern. "Hare-Hound" slept warm amidst the hay in the barn.

There was, of course, no bathroom, and every morning I had the privilege of watching George the Spartan, stark naked, standing upright in a small tin basin and anointing himself with ice-cold water from a sponge, whilst he sang "A Life on the Ocean Wave" at the top of his voice.

During the day the hot sun raised the temperature considerably, and in any event the air was so extremely dry and bracing that the cold was not so biting as the thermometer might have led one to expect. All the same, I don't think I should care to live there in the winter. When the freeze-up comes, and the snow, all wheeled traffic ceases and sleighs are used. If a load halts for a few minutes the runners freeze fast, and have to be loosened with a crowbar. If a wheeled buggy is used the wheels squeak so loudly that they can be heard for miles. This is because the grease itself freezes in the hub. Every nut and bolt also gives out a succession of sharp cracks and explosions due to the intense cold. All dwelling-houses have to fit double windows, as otherwise the glass would be covered with frost to a depth of several inches. All houses also are entered by a small built-on porch with a separate door, so that one can close the outer door before opening the inner one. During the whole winter, the nails used in the construction of the house give forth cracks like pistol-shots, and even in October, when George and I were there, the position of the heads of nails, in the boarding behind, was indicated on the surface of the wallpaper in our bedroom by small white circles of hoarfrost.

The summer, when it comes, is brief but brilliantly hot, and everything grows with astonishing speed. The prairie itself breaks out into flowers—harebells and great daisies, and things they call "Brown-eyed Susan", a kind of dwarf sunflower.

And now enough of climate and weather.

There was plenty to occupy our attention during the day. Threshing was in full swing, and the drone of the steam thresher, which each autumn visits every farm in the district, filled the air from daylight till dusk.

Two days after our arrival there was great excitement over the appearance of the men whom Will had summoned to sink an artesian well on the farm. The apparatus they erected consisted of a wooden tower, within which hung a pointed and very heavy steel bar twenty feet long and about three and a half inches in diameter, suspended by a wire rope passing over a pulley at the top. An 8 h.p. paraffin motor supplied the power to lift this steel plunger, which, being tripped at its highest point, plunged downwards with terrific force into the ground—every plunge driving it deeper. Water was poured into the hole to ease its progress, and at intervals the clay soup thus formed was lifted out by means of a tube with a one-way valve at the bottom.

After an hour's work, the plunger head had delved its way to a depth of 20 feet, when blue clay was reached. At 35 feet rock was met with, and a couple of dynamite cartridges were therefore attached to a steel rod, the fuse was lighted, and the whole affair lowered down to the required depth. In a few moments a heavy explosion took place, shaking the whole area—and driving then recommenced. At six p.m. the depth was 64 feet, and two 22-foot lengths of iron tubing were driven down, the upper length being carefully screwed into the lower. Every day during our fortnight's stay work continued steadily, much rock being encountered, but on the tenth day, amidst general rejoicings, an ample supply of excellent water was reached at a depth of 183 feet, and at a cost to Will of approximately \$250.

That night, as if in celebration, the Northern Lights were exceptionally brilliant. George and I had seen flickers on previous evenings, but on this night they flamed amazingly.

Imagine a gigantic flat ribbon of light stretched in folds—and edge downwards—right across the northern heavens, its lower edges frayed out and swaying in rippling waves from one end to the other. All the colours of the rainbow pass swiftly along its length—violet, pink, green, yellow. The shape is constantly changing. Suddenly

the clearly defined ribbon dissolves into just a haze of light which glows and pulses ; in another moment the haze concentrates at one particular point into a nucleus, which, rapidly developing shape and, growing in brilliance, swiftly forms into a shining spear of light, quivering against the dark blue-black of the sky. This, in turn, dissolves and spreads and concentrates once more into the ribbon formation, flickering and waving against the stars.

A most amazing spectacle. Even George said it made him feel solemn to watch this stupendous curtain of light weaving silently and mysteriously in the night sky above the vast silence of the Canadian prairie.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE FARM ON THE PRAIRIE (*cont.*)

WILL had several neighbours, the nearest being about four miles away, and we went a-visiting now and again. Poplar Farm did not run to a car, and we used the "Democrat" buggy and the wall-eyed mare for short distance calls. For longer journeys, however, Will was able, on occasion, to borrow a friend's Ford car.

We borrowed it one day, with its driver, Mr. Adams, to take us over to a large cattle ranch, lying about eight miles away, in country which Will described as alkali flats, and explained as being sterile land unsuitable for farming. Mr. Adams arrived with his car, and George and I stepped aboard through the gaps in the body which had once, I assume, been occupied by doors. There was at least three-quarters of a complete turn of backlash on the steering-wheel; several springs had burst through the cushions and now quivered passionately in the air in tune with the nerve-shattering vibration of the engine; the windscreen had dropped off long ago; and of the four mudguards, one was missing altogether, two relied for support on the tyres upon which they lay, and the fourth, the near front one, was occupied by an enormous cur-dog of menacing mien, which lay, unwinking and immovable, between it and the flapping bonnet. More anon of this extraordinary dog.

With the whole family waving us God-speed we moved away amidst an incredible uproar of sound, and were soon clashing along an embryonic track across the

open prairie. At the beginning, George and I, in the back seats, endeavoured to carry on an intelligent conversation, but the clangour set up by the collection of ironmongery on which we were riding was so overwhelming that we were finally reduced to pointing at the scenery and wagging our hands at each other.

Every time the front wheels encountered a hummock the back wheels closed up on them, concertina-wise, and the whole chassis humped itself up in the middle for all the world like a belligerent tom-cat, after which it uncoiled and proceeded as before. Moreover, whenever some speed was attained, any portion of the upholstery that wasn't being sat upon at the moment trailed and flickered out behind in fantastic flags and streamers. In one of the infrequent lulls George shouted to me: "Whose car did you say this was?"

"Adams," I yelled.

"Ah!" nodded George. "Well, that accounts for it!"

And yet the thing held together and brought us safely to the ranch, in spite of the really terrible track, for in some places the ruts were at least eighteen inches deep, and when all four wheels became slotted in them the car had no choice but to follow wherever they led.

The dwelling-house was quite a considerable wooden building, containing four upstairs bedrooms, and a large common-room downstairs, occupying practically all the ground floor. The ceiling and walls were constructed of varnished and polished pitchpine, matting lay upon the floor, and nearly the whole of the end of the room was occupied by an enormous American cooking stove. The supper was prepared in full view, and consisted of freshly baked bread and bread buns, fried chicken, potatoes, and beetroot, followed by stewed plums and pumpkin (pronounced "punk'n") pie, the whole washed down by frequent cups of tea.

Mr. Allanson, the owner of the ranch, leases some 24,000 acres of land, owns 3,000 head of cattle, more than 1,000 sheep, and employs twenty-eight men—cowboys!

But George was very disappointed to find that the cowboys did not look at all so romantic as they do on the pictures—no chaps, no ten-gallon hats, no high-heeled boots with silver spurs, no shooting-irons—just plain and workman-like, looking cowherds.

Just before sundown we watched the sheep being brought in to the stockade for the night, and the picture presented by the bleating animals—half hidden amidst a luminous golden haze of alkali dust, lambent with the level rays of the sinking sun, and, as a background, the farm buildings silhouetted against the glowing sunset sky—was one that impressed itself deeply upon my memory, no less than the subsequent drive home on that fortuitous collection of hardware calling itself an automobile at speeds varying from five to thirty-five miles an hour. As we rocked and bucketed over the prairie, a jack-rabbit suddenly leapt to its feet in front and fled ahead of us, its bobbing scut plainly to be seen for a moment in the wavering beam of our one serviceable headlight. Like a flash, the cur-dog sprang from the car and pursued the fleeing rabbit as it turned aside and disappeared in the darkness. The car still forged ahead with no slackening of speed, and it must have been at least twenty minutes later when the cur-dog ranged alongside again, leapt aboard and, licking its dripping chops, crouched once more in its place on the front wing.

An extraordinary dog. Adams told us that for the last two years it had never left the car, night or day, and that it slept beneath the steering column.

After we got to bed that night George said :

“Do you believe in the actual physical power of the will?”

“Why?” I asked.

“Well,” replied George in a thoughtful voice, “I’ve been thinking that it is only because that cur-dog is concentrating every bit of its will-power on it all the time, that Adams’ car keeps going at all. I honestly believe that if that dog stopped thinking about the car for even one

minute, it would immediately collapse into a mere heap of nuts and bolts."

On another occasion we accepted an invitation to take tea with some friends, whom I will name Mr. and Mrs. Hobson, living about a mile from Jansen. As a preliminary we all drove in to Jansen in the morning, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, George and myself. As we rattled across the prairie Will warned us to be careful, when throwing away our cigarette-ends, to see that they were extinguished, and he spoke of the tindery condition of the grass and the ease with which a serious prairie fire could thus be started. George admitted to me later, however, in strictest secrecy, that not long after Will's warning, he forgot and tossed away, unthinkingly, one of his stubs. As soon as it left his hand, of course, he remembered, but, being ashamed of his action and reluctant to ask Will to stop, he let it lie, being somewhat reassured by the fact that, although for some time afterwards he kept his eyes glued to the spot where it had fallen, he saw no suspicious wisp of smoke. By the time we arrived in Jansen he had forgotten all about it.

Jansen consisted of a small collection of wooden shacks and houses bordering an unmade and deeply-rutted road with board walks fringing the edges. Two of the buildings were small local branches of Canadian banks, some were general stores and showrooms belonging to agricultural implement makers, one was a rough-and-ready hotel-cum-restaurant run by a Chinaman, one a livery stable, and the most frequented building of all was the "pool-room" or billiard hall, which also housed the local barber. Jansen is inhabited mostly by Germans, and one hears more German than English spoken there.

We had quite a decent lunch at the hotel, and, later, Ma went to meet Mrs. Hobson, whilst we men visited the pool-room, where George, with his eye-glass, caused quite a sensation. With his simple face and deceptively vacant look he was promptly the target of a challenge to a game with a stake of \$10 by one of the frequenters—whose discomfiture, however, was swift and complete.

The inner details of our visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hobson's shack are rather entertaining. It seems that Mrs. Hobson greeted Ma when they met with the statement that she really didn't know *what* to give us for the evening meal, but how about tinned salmon and lobster? Ma agreed that tinned salmon and lobster, separately or together, would be delightful, and thereupon they both repaired to the grocer's, where Mrs. Hobson, laughing gaily, borrowed \$2.50 from Ma with which to purchase the canned provender. They then trudged a mile together out to the shack, Mrs. H. borrowing a further 60 cents on the way in order to buy some cream.

On arrival at the little shack Ma found everything topsy-turvy—apparently the normal condition of this particular *ménage*. The bed was still unmade, and a collection of unwashed pots and crockery, representing the debris of many past meals, filled and overflowed the sink. Ma, therefore, being a helpful and tidy soul, buckled to and "redded" things up. She also made the salmon mould, and, indeed, most of the evening meal, whilst Mrs. H. fussed around doing a great deal of talking but very little constructive work.

Meanwhile Will, George and I were waiting about in Jansen for Mr. Hobson, who was deep in negotiation for a new cultivator. Finally he told us to make our own way out to the house and he would follow when he could. As a matter of fact, he didn't arrive until we were on the point of leaving. However, we drove out.

The shack consisted of two small bedrooms, a kitchen and a tiny living-room—the latter so cluttered up with ancient magazines, guns, old shirts, cartridges both full and empty, boots, pyjamas and general junk, that a wholesale clearance was necessary before we could even sit down.

Neither George nor I cared a hoot, of course—it was all great fun, really—but to my mind a certain amount of piquancy was added by the fact that the walls of the house were plastered with a collection of beautiful Bond Street studio photographs depicting Mrs. Hobson in the gown

and ostrich feather plumes she had worn comparatively recently on the occasion of her presentation at the Court of St. James!

But she was a charming woman, and Mr. Hobson adored her—and that is all that really matters, after all.

During our drive home across the prairie, Will began to sniff suspiciously, and soon afterwards we came to a place where the track commenced to be bordered, on the side opposite to the direction from which the wind was blowing, by a blackened area that stretched away under the moon as far as we could see. Gazing across this charred expanse we perceived, on the far horizon, three glowing points of light.

“Prairie fire!” exclaimed Will, pulling the mare to a standstill—“and,” he added, pointing with his whip to the distant red beacons—“there go poor old Hutchinson’s hayricks!”

I myself had a perfectly clear conscience, and said so several times, quite firmly. George made a noise like an innocent man, but said nothing at all, and it wasn’t until a week later, when we were in the Rocky Mountains, that he unburdened his guilty soul to me. The fact that Will considered that Hutchinson would be able to claim compensation under the terms of his insurance policy was possibly the source of some comfort to George, but for a long time afterwards, first in secret and subsequently to me *ad nauseam*, he blamed himself most bitterly and called himself all the kinds of dastardly criminal he could think of. I gave him quite a few helpful suggestions myself.

The fire must have destroyed or chased from their homes many of the furtive denizens of the grass, for there was on the prairie no lack of wild life. The jack-rabbits I have already mentioned. Similar in size to our hare, they are, during the summer, pretty much the same colour too, but on the approach of snow-time their coats, as a protective measure, become pure white.

There are three types of wolf found in Saskatchewan: the coyote, a harmless but noisy animal slightly larger than an Airedale, that infests the prairie and renders night

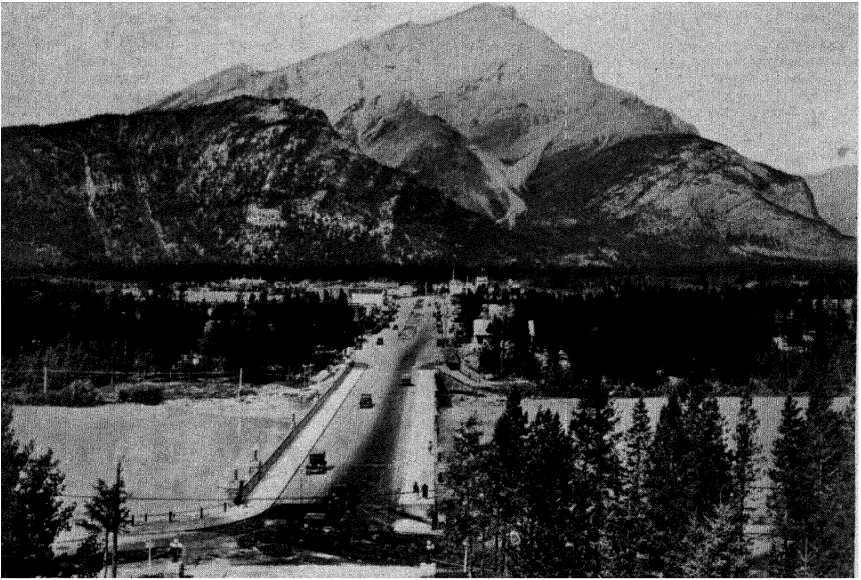
hideous with its mournful howls ; the grey wolf, slightly larger ; and, finally, the blue timber wolf, slinking, and, when hungry, apt to be dangerous, that lives in the more northern woods and seldom comes as far south as Jansen. Will told me that in the winter-time, when Big Quill Lake, which lies some twenty miles to the north, is frozen over, it is a favourite sport of the farmers to take their cars, and, with the aid of dogs, to run down wolves on the ice.

There were many coyotes, foxes, skunks and badgers on Will's farm and in the neighbourhood. There was also, of course, the gopher, a small and rather pathetic-looking squirrel-like creature which, however, destroys millions of bushels of grain in Canada every year. Motor-ing over the prairie at night-time is a distinctly sporting thing to do, owing to the chance that a badger or a coyote may have decided to excavate a large hole in the track since the last time you passed that way.

There are plenty of birds to shoot for the pot also, and we never left the house for a tramp without taking a gun. Prairie-chicken—a sort of large-size grouse with reddish plumage speckled with white, heavily feathered legs, and two extraordinary patches of bare inflatable skin on each side of the neck—were numerous, and one morning I was awakened by a shot immediately outside our bedroom window to find, on peering forth, that Will had slain one of these beautiful birds in a most unsportsman-like manner by potting it as it sat on the roof of a small wooden hut, behind the house, that was visited by members of the family more frequently in the morning than during any other portion of the day.

Several times we saw flocks of turkeys, consisting of two or three hundred birds, pass over us flying high, and more than once we noticed wild swans also in flight. But it was amongst the wild geese and the wild ducks that we had the best sport.

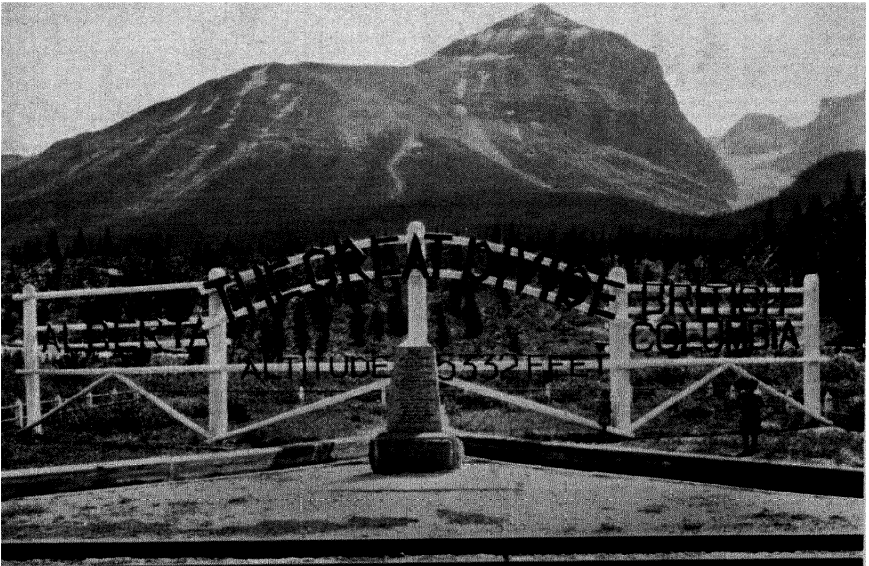
The prairie is covered, as has been said, with a short wiry grass, and when the wind is blowing it looks like a brownish-yellow sea with millions of little hurrying waves. The land is perfectly flat, but dotted about all over its



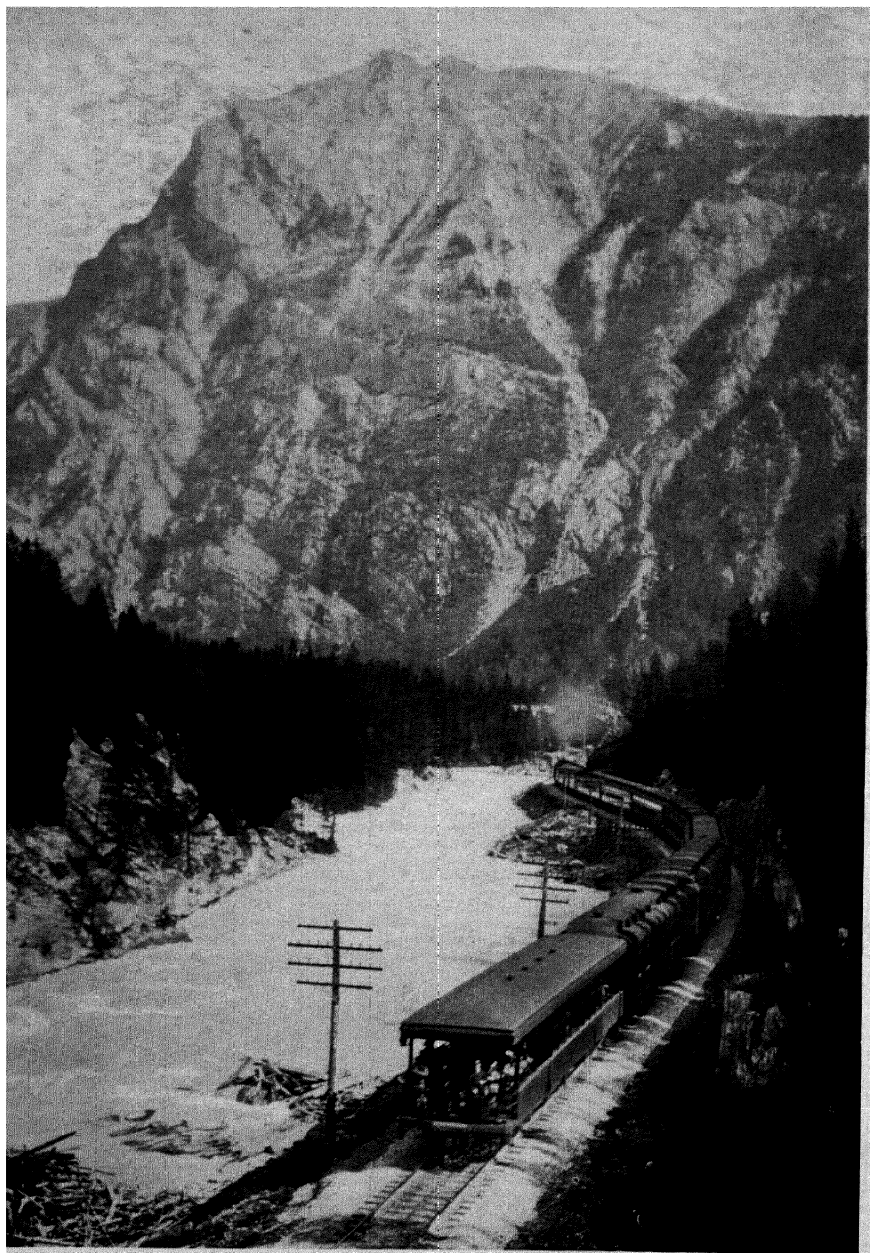
BANFF

" . . . towering mountains covered with a garment of white."

(see page 52)



"The train halted here to catch its breath"



THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.
"Through the narrow Kicking Horse Pass."

(see page 55)

surface with sloughs—pronounced “sloos”—cup-shaped hollows in which water collects, forming pools and small lakes. In a hollow quite close to the farm was a buffalo-stone, a relic of the past. The hollow in this case was not a natural one, but had been pawed and beaten out by the hooves of the countless buffaloes that used to roam the prairies, as they rubbed their hides against the six-foot high stone, polishing it in the process to a glasslike smoothness.

The larger sloughs, however, in which a considerable body of water collects, are the natural resort at sunset of the geese and the ducks.

In the late afternoon of the last day of our stay we drove to a large slough—a small lake, in fact—lying north of the farm at a distance of about three miles. We parked the mare and buggy some little distance away, and, as we walked across to our positions in the rushes, I noticed that, cast by the horizontal rays of the setting sun, our striding shadows extended for a distance of at least five miles across the level surface of the golden prairie.

Spacing ourselves, we crouched down and waited. Above us the skies flamed with sunset hues, and the glassy lake below reflected their glory. Not a sound broke the silence save the whispering of the reeds in the soft evening breeze.

And then, suddenly, from far and far away, came a faint murmur in the skies, and against the orange of the sunset we perceived a tiny black wedge moving swiftly towards us.

The wild geese were coming!

Closer they came, and the “honk-honk” chorus grew louder. As they swept over the lake the whole great company of them, in perfect unison, banked steeply and swung round in a circle, with the wind whistling shrilly through their wing feathers. In a solid mass they dived headlong towards the lake, and I held my breath in anticipation of the coming crash, but just at the very last possible moment they flattened out like a flowing sheet, skimmed the surface, and, with a subdued roar, settled and floated

motionless. The sudden stillness was almost uncanny. But no sooner were they down than two more wedges came trumpeting and rushing through the skies from the east, and these also settled on the water. Perhaps as many as three hundred birds were now floating quietly on the pink mirror of the lake.

My weapon was a single-barrel Winchester repeating shot-gun, of a type you do not see in England very often. The magazine held seven "shells" or cartridges—and the ejector, with one movement, threw out the exploded shell and placed the next full one in position. This is the sort of gun to have when three hundred wild geese come and sit down in front of you.

There were four of us hidden in the rushes: Will on the south, George on the west, myself on the north, and Young Willie, the twelve-year-old, armed with a rook rifle, on the east.

Will opened the proceedings by firing his gun into the air, and immediately, with a roar like an express train, the birds rose *en masse*, and, falling at once into formation, swept in a rapidly rising wedge round the lake. We all fired as fast as we could load and pull trigger, and, although I pumped out seven shots, I am afraid that only five geese fell tumbling out of that gaggle to my own gun. Still, five wasn't so bad, and they were beautiful birds, as fat as butter.

Will and George fired rapidly, and Young Willie's rook rifle spat twice on my left. It was wild work whilst it lasted, but in another moment the birds had disappeared and the skies were empty of all save the gorgeous colours of the sunset. Will murmured that he had downed four birds, George claimed seven for certain, not being quite sure about the eighth, and young Willie modestly admitted having accounted for one bird.

Seventeen geese; good hunting indeed!

Will and his son gathered five birds without much difficulty, but neither George nor myself, search we never so closely, could retrieve more than six of the remaining

twelve. It was a most extraordinary thing. We still went on looking, of course, but the conviction was steadily forcing itself upon me that George, poor fish, must have killed his solitary bird seven times.

Young Willie, carrying several birds, went to deposit them in the waiting buggy, whilst Will and I still helped George to look for his elusive geese. As we quested about—on my part with growing indignation—we heard the sharp “phat” of the boy’s rifle, and on rejoining him learnt that he had sighted and killed a skunk. But it hardly needed his announcement to convince us of this because the evening air was redolent with the atrocious stench that a skunk emits when its mind is seriously perturbed. We inspected it from the windward side—a beautiful beast, black with a white band running along each side of the back and joining at the neck. Its tail, of black and white hair, was like a flag. I believe that its fur is sold to credulous women under the name of Alaska sable.

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And so ended our visit to Poplar Farm.

The next morning we rose early, and, after a somewhat affecting leave-taking, were driven by Will in a south-westerly direction to Lockwood, where we caught the ten o’clock local to Regina, capital city of Saskatchewan. Thus we came again to the Trans-Continental main line which was to carry us, via the Rockies, to Vancouver. Regina, besides being an up-and-coming city, is one of the chief depots of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, better known under their old name of the Royal North-west Mounted Police.

At six p.m. that same evening the heavy Trans-Canada express came rumbling into Regina station, and we climbed aboard to find that not only was it one of the “Dominion” service of expresses, but, as was immediately evident from the chuckles and smiles of our old friend the grinning coon, it was the identical train in which George and I had travelled from Ottawa to Winnipeg. As a matter

of fact, when we left Poplar Farm with its friendly atmosphere, we had felt rather like two homeless wanderers faring forth into the cold, hard world, and it was therefore with a feeling that we had, in some measure, fallen again amongst friends, that we faced the prospect of turning into our travelling bedsteads and going through the familiar contortions of undressing with the legs at right angles to the torso.



CHAPTER SIX

THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

AN hour later, at about seven p.m., when George and I were taking our seats in the diner, the train pulled in to a station and came to a standstill. It remained there so long that George put his head out to see where we were.

"Moose-Jaw," said George. "What a queer name ; probably a relic of the past. I should imagine there are no mooses—mice—moose, here now."

A fellow passenger at the next table kindly volunteered the information that the name was a shortened version of an old Indian phrase meaning, "The-creek-where-the-white-man-mended-the-cart-with-the-jawbone-of-a-moose."

We were now working by "Mountain Time", and the change-over had, during our journey from Winnipeg to Jansen, made it necessary for us to set our watches back a further one hour.

During the night we passed from Saskatchewan into the Province of Alberta, and when morning came we rolled into Calgary, lying in a bend of the Bow River, and the largest town on the railway line between Winnipeg and Vancouver. Our friend of the train told us at breakfast that not far from Calgary is an extraordinary district where, beneath the surface, there lies a natural reservoir of gas, which is piped to towns and villages and made to supply fuel, light, heat and power at a very low figure. There is, indeed, far more gas than can be harnessed and used, and the bulk of it is therefore set on fire, as being the easiest way in which to dispose of it. The result is that at

night-time the whole district is lit up by scores of these gigantic but useless pillars of flame.

On the big Trans-Canada expresses they have an observation car at the rear of the train. This car is fitted with especially wide and high plate-glass windows down each side, movable armchairs and a platform at the back, with camp-stools, where you can stand or sit in the open air and watch the scenery whilst the train goes thundering along. George sat for hours gazing downwards in a fascinated way at the steel rails unrolling themselves endlessly beneath his feet. They seemed to have a hypnotic effect on him, similar to that experienced by a hen when you place her beak upon a white chalked line.

Our chatty train friend advised us to hurry over our breakfasts and secure good places on the observation-car platform before the train left Calgary, because, said he, there was likely to be a rush for standing room. When we asked him why, he merely smiled and said, "You will see!"

And we did! As the train cleared the city and headed westwards, George, who was leaning over the brass rail at one side, and looking forward, cried to me to join him. I did so, and there, a hundred miles ahead of us,

Faint and far distant in the misty sky
Floating in shimmering cloud, the eternal snows . . .
Hung like a mighty dream

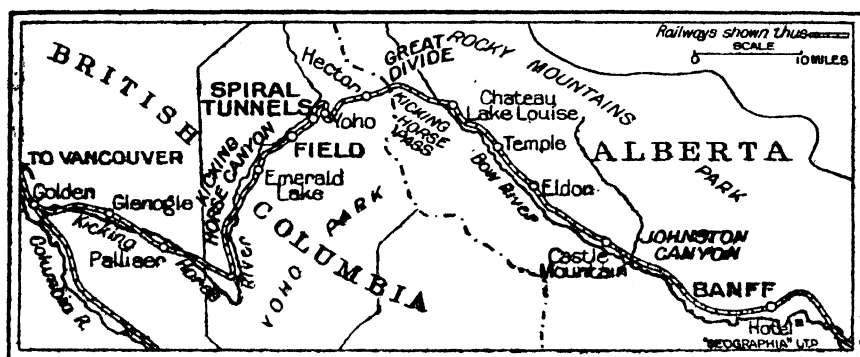
. . . a rampart of towering white peaks, glittering and shining in the morning sunshine—the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

The track began to climb steadily through the rounded grassy foothills, crossing and recrossing the lovely Bow River, whose gorge we finally entered as we reached the land of evergreen forests and the great grey bulk of the first mountain ranges.

The engine doggedly thrashed its way up the never-ending climb, hauling the heavy, sullen coaches up the single-track line, round the face of precipices, through sudden echoing rock-tunnels, across spidery bridges

whose open ties gave dizzy-making glimpses of the river foaming amongst its rocks hundreds of feet below, curving like a serpent to make the most of every convenient escarpment—fighting every foot of the way and snorting defiance to the everlasting hills.

Above us the snow-clad peaks, silent, majestic and indifferent, glittered coldly in the morning sunlight, supremely indifferent to the mechanical worm crawling so laboriously at their feet.



C.P.R. MAIN LINE ROUTE THROUGH ROCKIES.

Two and a half hours after leaving Calgary we reached Banff, 4,500 feet above sea-level, which is 100 feet higher than the top of Ben Nevis. Here we decided to break our journey for twenty-four hours in response to the suggestion—made not without guile, I suspect—of our train companion, a Scotsman, who was doing the same thing.

On enquiry from the stationmaster we found that the famous Banff Springs Hotel had just been closed for the winter, which was rather a pity, we thought, when we saw it later. It is a magnificent building which dominates the whole valley.

Firmly shepherded by our Scots friend, we took a humble bus from the station to the King Edward Hotel, instead of the lordly taxi that George made for, on principle, like a homing bee.

After lunch the Scotsman cautiously agreed to contribute one-third of the expense of hiring a car for a run round, and this is where it began to dawn upon me that his desire that we should stop off at Banff was not entirely due to our charming personalities.

It was bitterly cold in the open car, and McBride, our Highland friend, kept flapping his arms and complaining that his ears and nose were becoming frost-bitten.

The views were magnificent—towering mountains of pearly-grey limestone covered with a garment of white, their massive flanks invested with pine trees whose every branch and twig balanced its load of snow. Taking the advice of our driver-guide—and Scottie said he didn't mind how far-r-r we went because we had hired the car for the whole afternoon—we were inveigled into driving to Johnston Canyon. On arriving at the mouth of it, however, the chauffeur told us we should have to get out and walk up to the Twin Pools.

"How far?" demanded McBride suspiciously.

"Oh, a few minutes walk," replied the driver.

We set off therefore up the narrow gorge. The path is cleverly scooped out of the rocky face of the two opposing cliffs, and crosses to and fro many times over the crystal-clear waters of the torrent by means of rather precarious-looking log bridges. The safe negotiation of these was made no easier by the fact that they were covered with snow and with ice formed from the frozen spray.

These difficulties, added to the mounting indignation of our Hielan' laddie—who was walking on his flat feet when he had paid good money to be driven—made the two-mile scramble one long argument, carried on by the three of us in single file.

The scene that greeted us at the head of the canyon, however, repaid us. The gorge had been steadily growing narrower until at last it became a mere slit with a ribbon of sky overhead, the rushing stream below, and we three poised precariously somewhere in between. Turning the last corner, we were suddenly confronted by a wall

of water thundering down from the lip of the canyon far above us, and falling into a circular pool of the very bluest water I have ever seen.

Yes, it was worth the scramble—it must have been, for even Scottie said so. Moreover, his frost-bitten nose and ears were now normal again, and so it was a very much cheerier party that picked its way back through Johnston Canyon to the waiting motor-car.

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To bathe in an open-air swimming-bath with the thermometer standing considerably below freezing point seems an asinine thing to do, but it is precisely what all three of us did next morning. We hired the car again and hied us to the Sulphur Springs Baths, which lie on the southern slope of the valley.

On the flanks of the mountain is set a spacious swimming-bath surrounded by enormous sheets of plate-glass, held in place by graceful concrete pillars crowned with flowers and shrubs. The water in the bath is pea-green in colour, pleasantly warm and strongly impregnated with sulphur. It was rather a strange experience to emerge from the artificially heated dressing-room into a freezing temperature, to walk with shrinking, bare feet through crunching snow and ice, and thereafter to plunge into the warm green water of the great bath.

I was in first, and had the ill-concealed pleasure of watching George, looking strangely naked without his eye-glass, peer dubiously round the edge of his dressing-room door, come forth, and, stepping, like Agag, delicately, pick his way like a cat through the snow until he could dive into the pool.

Being safely and comfortably ensconced, we both roared derisive encouragement to our Highland friend, who burst forth from his compartment, flapped his arms wildly, and, dashing hurriedly across the ice-encrusted platform, slipped on the edge and arrived amongst us on the flat of his stomach.

The scenery in an average swimming-bath, unless there happens to be mixed bathing, is not inspiring, but here marvellous snow-capped peaks were on every side of us. It was interesting to think, also, that the water in the bath came from natural hot sulphur springs—so hot, in fact, that it had to be cooled off before admission to the pool.

There were several blow-holes on the mountain side, surrounded by deep snow, from which continuous columns of steam were ascending into the frosty air.

Our train was due to leave Banff soon after 11 a.m., but we made time to call in at the Buffalo Park—an 800-acre reservation where the bison roam wild more or less. Until measures were taken to protect these creatures they were in serious danger of extinction, but the herd at Banff is in a very healthy condition, and, judging from the birth statistics, there would seem to be no fear of their dying out. We drove right inside the reservation and cruised about in the car amongst the animals as they stood and lay around. As we passed a rather truculent-looking brute the thought crossed my mind that a race between an infuriated buffalo and a Ford car would be a distinctly sporting event, but—and perhaps this was lucky—the same thought did not happen to occur to any of the buffaloes that morning.

Canada possesses fourteen National Parks, of which that of the Rocky Mountains is the largest. It has an area of some 2,750 square miles, and Banff is its capital and administrative centre. Banff is, of course, one of the most popular mountain resorts in the world, but, in McBride's eyes, attains its greatest distinction from the fact that in August every year all the Scots, not only of the West but from every part of Canada, flock there to attend the great Highland gathering, when sports, dancing, music, and also "bag-piping"—as one C.P.R. leaflet puts it—are undergone.

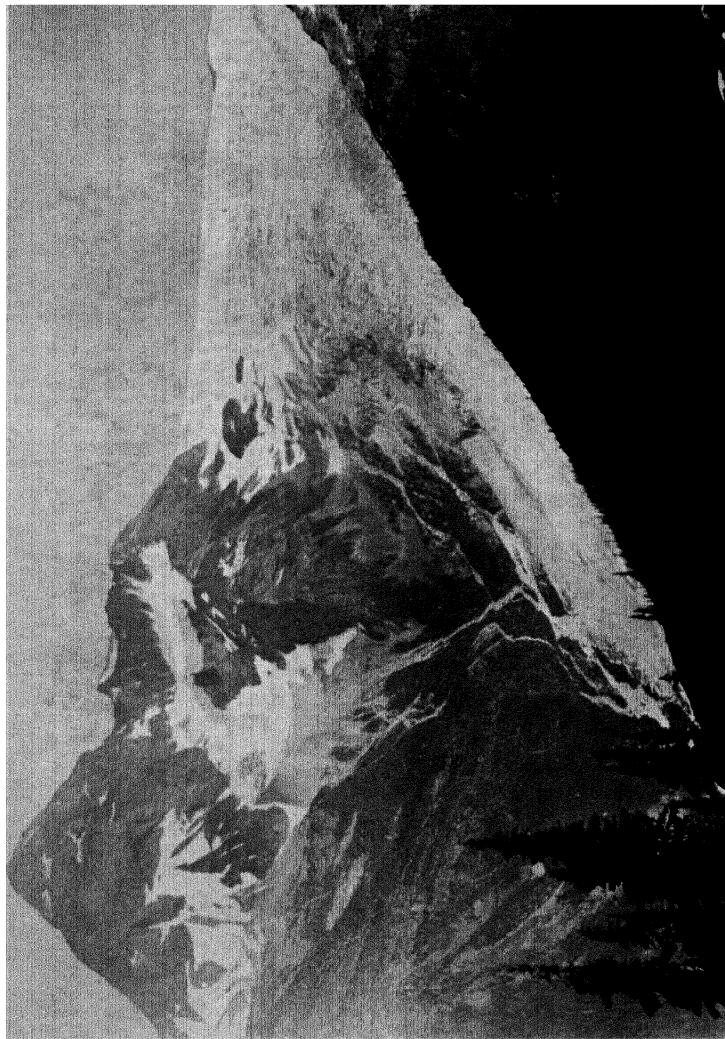
We entrained again soon after 11 a.m. and resumed, amidst magnificent scenery, the climb to The Great Divide, which is the summit of the range, the highest elevation



FIELD, B.C.

" . . . we saw, far beneath us, the track we should soon be using."

(see page 55)



THE CANADIAN ROCKIES.

" . . . we caught glimpses of steep glaciers . . . "

(see page 57)

reached by the railway, the borderline between Alberta and British Columbia, and the backbone of the Continent.

After its long and exhausting climb the train halted here to catch its breath, and we all descended from the carriages to the track. There are some neat wooden palings with the words THE GREAT DIVIDE in cut-out letters fastened to the bars, and coming towards them from behind is a small open concrete conduit through which runs a stream of crystal-clear water. On reaching the wooden palings the conduit divides east and west like the two arms of the letter Y—the stream dividing likewise.

Not at all impressive, you say.

But it becomes so, I think, when you realize that by dropping a pebble into that stream you may deflect eastwards to the chilly shores of Hudson Bay water which otherwise would have flowed westward and laved the sunlit beaches of the South Sea Islands.

Climbing aboard again, the train began to drop steeply down the western side of the range, through the narrow Kicking Horse Pass, to Field, and, on the way, made use of two extraordinary spiral tunnels that have been constructed through two mountains in order to negotiate the difficult grade. After a steep descent the train plunges into a tunnel which bends round within the mountain in a complete circle, the grade dropping sharply all the time, and emerges almost immediately below the point at which it entered, but at a very much lower level. Crossing a high bridge, it then plunges into a second mountain side lying at right angles to the first, and repeats the performance, entering at one place and emerging again far below. Looking downwards at one point we saw, far beneath us, the track we hoped we should very soon be using. It is a marvellous piece of engineering, and resembles very closely the similar works at Wassen on the St. Gotthard Railway.

Every turn in the track revealed new mountains and new vistas—glimpses of vast valleys with rivers like tiny white threads twisting about at the bottom, soaring,

snowclad pinnacles—the sheer might and mass and magnitude of it all was awe-inspiring to a degree. One could not help reflecting that up there, amidst the silent and lonely peaks, the clang and rattle of our little train would be dwarfed to nothingness, that, thousands of years before Major Rogers struggled through the Selkirks five decades ago with his little theodolite, those towering giants were there—aloof, unchanging, indifferent—and that they will still be there just the same when man's toy tunnels have caved in and his shining steel rails have rusted to powder.

Some slight excitement, and a halt lasting for three-quarters of an hour, were caused by the discovery of smoke and flames irrupting through the floor-boards of the car in front of ours.

The conductor came along the passage, and George asked him what was amiss.

"Hart Barks," replied the coon with a reassuring grin.

"Hart Barks?" repeated George, puzzled.

"Yassuh! Captain! Suh! Hart Barks."

"Oh, I *see*!" laughed George, highly relieved. "Why, of course—to be sure! Hart Barks! Ha, very good; very good indeed! Well, well!"

When the coon had passed on George leaned over to me and hissed: "What the *hell* are hart barks, anyway?"

Here Scottie, on the other side of the passage, was able to help us.

"He means a hoat boaks, ye ken. D'ye no ken whit a hoat boaks iss? It's when an axle becomes ower-heated wi' freection; nae suffeecient grease, ye ken."

But it wasn't a hot box as it happened. On investigation it was found that one of the brakes had stuck, and, becoming almost white-hot, had fired some of the adjoining woodwork. Earth scrabbled up from the track soon put the fire out, and after allowing the shoe to cool and cutting out the brakes on that particular car, we proceeded.

All the way along from Banff a splendid motor road

marches parallel with, and nearly always in sight of, the railway, and several times the train ran brief races with cars and motor coaches.

From Field, where, by the way, we reached "Pacific Time" and for the third time had to put our watches back one hour, the line descended into the valley of the Columbia River and then climbed up again into the massive and spectacular Selkirk Range, with the five-mile-long Connaught Tunnel bringing us to Glacier.

There are no fewer than six distinct ranges of mountains in the Rockies, stretching continuously for nearly 600 miles between the prairies and the Pacific coast, but the Selkirk range is, geologically, the oldest of them all. It was already scarred and bitten by Time when the rest of the Rockies were being pushed up from the bottom of the sea. Some of the mountain peaks touch an altitude of nearly 20,000 feet—4,000 feet higher than the summit of Mont Blanc—and more than once we caught glimpses of steep glaciers stricken into immobility between their valley walls.

Tired with continuous peering and gazing, George and I retired early to bed, but, so far as I myself was concerned, only to lie awake. A persistent and maddening creaking developed somewhere in George's mattress above my head, to which was added the severe swaying and lurching of our car as the train swung first to the right and then to the left round mountain sides, through echoing rock-tunnels and across rumbling bridges.

An exceptionally violent swerve sent my heart into my mouth and I lifted the blind and looked out. The full moon was riding high in a perfectly clear sky, and far below me lay a great lake, its waters black and still and mysterious.

A beautiful sight. Not so beautiful to me, however, was the fact that at that moment the train rushed through a tunnel hewn out of a projecting spur of rock, and, with terrifying suddenness, shot out upon a totally inadequate ledge grudgingly chipped from the very face of a precipice, with, on my side, a sheer and uninterrupted drop of a

couple of thousand feet to the lake below. Having in some miraculous manner passed safely over this death-trap, the crazy train incontinently twirled itself round a jutting crag and plunged roaring beneath a slanting wooden avalanche shed, only to emerge again into the moonlight, hooting frantically and travelling faster than ever.

It has been said that, relying upon the generous character of the dinners served on the train, the C.P.R. run these expresses only at night owing to the scarifying nature of the track, and that as a reasonable precaution they station men at intervals along the line to count the coaches as they pass, so as to keep tally on any that may have left the procession at an especially abrupt corner.

However that may be, on the principle that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise", I carefully buttoned my blind down again, poked George awake and told him to look for himself if he didn't believe me, and, turning over, fell, surprisingly, fast asleep—awaking in the early morning to find the train still providentially on the metals and loping easily through the foothills on the Pacific side of the Rockies.

Sicamous . . . Kamloops . . . Vancouver—alluring names. From Kamloops the line, continually descending, followed the imposing canyons of the Thompson and Fraser Rivers. Presently the Fraser River widened out, and, running through verdant and meadowlike country, we reached Vancouver at nine o'clock in the forenoon. The weather was misty, a persistent drizzle was falling, and we lost no time, therefore, in seeking the comfortable shelter of the Hotel Vancouver.



CHAPTER SEVEN

IN AND AROUND VANCOUVER

WHEN it came to considering the question of transporting ourselves from Vancouver to Japan, George and I debated for some considerable time as to what route to take, and which steamship line to patronize. George, who is rather indecently fond of his food, approved so highly of the C.P.R. catering as experienced so far in their hotels and on their trains, that he was all for taking one of their Empress boats from Vancouver, but, whilst I was in hearty agreement with all he said, I felt I would like to surround myself with an Oriental atmosphere as soon as I could, by sailing on a Japanese steamer.

Put like that, George suddenly came over all Nippon too, and without more ado we sallied forth into the drizzle and sought out a shipping agency.

We found that a Nippon Yusen Kaisha boat was sailing four days later from Seattle, and also that a steamer belonging to the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Line—since amalgamated with the N.Y.K., by the way—was due to leave San Francisco in about three weeks' time. The Nippon boat obviously fitted our time-table best, but from the very moment George was shown a photo of the Toyo Line steamer he was immovably resolved to travel on it. Her lines were those of a graceful yacht. She was a two-funnelled, 11,000-ton vessel, her name was the s.s. *Nippon Maru*, and, to George's delight, she possessed a cut-away stem—a clipper bow. There was even a little bowsprit sticking out in front!

Having gained my point as to the nationality of the

vessel on which we were to travel, I gave way to George on this smaller matter, and we thereupon booked our passages definitely on the *Nippon Maru* sailing from 'Frisco to Yokohama, via Honolulu, twenty-one days hence. By the way, the meaning is often asked of the word *Maru* which is tacked on the names of Japanese ships—*Chichibu Maru*, *Tatsuta Maru*, *Asama Maru*, and so on. The origin of the word is obscure, but Basil H. Chamberlain, the well-known authority on Japan, suggests that it is a corruption of the word *maro*, which is an archaic term of endearment. Hence its use in such ancient proper names as *Tamura-Marō*, a great general who subdued the Ainos; *Okina-Marō*, a favourite dog of one of the Emperors; *Abe-no-Nakamarō*, an eminent scholar of the eighth century, *et al.* The warrior's pet sword, the sportsman's favourite dog, the oarsman's boat, would all naturally come to be distinguished by the same affectionate and half-personal name, much as the English sailor or engineer calls his ship or engine "she".

The name *Maru* is applied to merchant vessels only. Men-of-war take *Kan* instead, as *Maya Kan*, *Asama Kan*, and so on, *Kan* being originally a Chinese word meaning "war-vessel".

It would seem therefore that *Nippon Maru* meant neither more nor less than "Good old Nippon", and such, indeed, she ultimately became to George and to me.

Having booked our passages, the question arose as to what we were going to do with ourselves for the three weeks until she sailed, and in order to obtain advice we decided to ring up a solicitor to whom we had a letter of introduction. Norman V. Gilling, the solicitor, answered the telephone himself, and, with the instant and eager friendliness of the Dominions, put on his hat and came round to the hotel at once. Furthermore, within ten minutes of his arrival we had accepted his invitation to stay with him at his home. He explained that his wife and children were away, and that he was leading a bachelor existence, but if we didn't mind pigging it a bit . . .

We didn't, of course, and so it was arranged.

After doing some shopping, including the purchase and despatch of small gifts to Ma Wilson and the youngsters, and a patent decoy duck-call to Will himself, we cancelled our rooms at the hotel, deposited our trunks, and, with small but rather heavy suitcases, arrived in plenty of time at Gilling's office to enable us all to catch the ferryboat.



VANCOUVER, B.C.

Vancouver City, as will be seen from the map, lies on the southern bank of an inlet of the Strait of Georgia, which, in turn, separates the mainland from Vancouver Island. Caulfeild, Gilling's home, lay on the northern bank of the inlet, thus necessitating a ferry crossing.

Arrived on the far side, Gilling hustled us, burdened as we were with our heavy suitcases, into an extraordinary little one-coach petrol-driven motor-train, which promptly

tuff-tuffed out of the station along a single-track line into what looked like primitive jungle.

The two things that struck me about the landscape through which the tiny train bustled its way were, firstly, the astounding luxuriance and density of the vegetation, now painted in the most vivid and gorgeous colours by the autumn; and, secondly, the incredible number of tree-stumps, decayed and otherwise, and of logs and fallen trees covering the ground, floating in the creeks and strewing the very railway embankments. Rocks, roots, stumps, fallen trees, all were covered and smothered with ferns, shrubs, and moss, whilst springing from all this matted undergrowth and towering upwards to mingle in a dense canopy of leaves and branches overhead were the massive trunks of pines, hemlock, and cedar trees. Nature in her most lavish mood. After the treeless prairie and the austerity of the snowclad Rockies, this lush and eager riot of vegetation produced in me a feeling of warmth and luxury and sensuous well-being difficult to put into words.

From time to time the little car halted amidst the trees at small wooden platforms bearing such names as Cypress, Altamont, and Ambleside, and at each there alighted one or two business men who, even before the train left the station, had disappeared from sight along the little pathways that wound away through the tree-boles. Only now and then, so dense was the foliage, did we catch fleeting glimpses of a house.

Caulfeild, Gilling's station, was just such another little wooden platform set down amongst the trees. Here we alighted, and, waiting until the train had moved away, we hopped down on the metals after Gilling, who led us along the line in the direction the train had taken.

Immediately beyond the station the track spanned a narrow but exceedingly deep ravine. Gilling, being accustomed to it, strode confidently ahead, but George and I, carrying our accursed suitcases, found it rather dizzy work crossing the widely-spaced cedar sleepers, whose gaps revealed a yawning chasm and a stream tumbling and

foaming amongst its boulders far below. Safely across the bridge, we trudged onwards, carrying our infernal suitcases, until Gilling suddenly turned off the track to the left into a narrow leaf-strewn path leading steeply downwards. We followed him—still carrying our thrice damnable suitcases. The track fell sharply and then abruptly ceased at the massive butt-end of a large cedar tree trunk lying prone, and tilted down the hillside at an even steeper angle than the pathway. We clambered on top of this, and, balancing ourselves as best we could—encumbered as we were with our brown leather suitcases—we did a sort of steeply sloping tight-rope performance down its slippery length, and so, at last, reached the clearing which surrounded the house—an attractive-looking dwelling of the bungalow type, stained a dull green, and almost crowded off its foundations by the forest trees that hemmed it about. On every side rose forest giants and riotous undergrowth; indeed, one felt that only by constant watchfulness and vigilance was the primeval forest prevented from closing in upon the little clearing and swallowing it again completely.

Being built on the hillside, the house was lower at the back than the front, which looked down through a partially cleared gap in the trees to where the waters of the Pacific lapped on the pebbles of a tiny cove. There was no other approach to the house by land, save by the sporting path down which we had come, and the whole place was so difficult of access and so isolated that the absence of Mrs. Gilling and the youngsters occasioned me no surprise at all.

On entering the house, however, I was surprised to find that the kitchen stove was lit and that a log fire was crackling cheerfully on the sitting-room hearth—till Gilling explained that a fellow named Nash, a naval pensioner, came in every day to look after things. It also seemed that bread, milk, eggs and butter were regularly delivered even in the midst of the jungle, and Gilling, who proved to be able to wield a frypan with the best, soon prepared an appetizing meal of fried ham and eggs, bread

and butter, and lashings of tea. His accomplishments did not end here, either. After the meal and the washing-up, we retired to the lounge, where Gilling, seating himself at the grand piano which graced the room, proceeded to entertain the pair of us with music both classical and otherwise, ranging from César Franck's "Prélude, Aria et Final", to the latest jiggy foxtrot.

Later, as we sat and chatted round the fire, I asked Gilling what he suggested we should do to occupy our time until we sailed from 'Frisco.

"Well," said he, thoughtfully puffing at his pipe, "there are, of course, heaps of things you could do. For one thing, you can go up the Fraser River and see salmon being caught and canned by the thousand, and, if it comes to that, we might go and do some salmon-fishing of our own on Vancouver Island. Let's see, how long have you got? Twenty-one days? I know what! Take a trip up to Alaska and back!"

"Alaska?" queried George, astonished. "Alaska? Why, that means the Yukon, surely, and gold mines, and the Arctic Circle, and the Trail of '98, and huskies, and reindeer. No, that's Lapland, isn't it? But, anyhow, we've only got three weeks to spare."

"Well," laughed Gilling, "that gives you plenty of time. The trip to Skagway and back takes less than a fortnight, and, I believe, costs about twenty-five pounds."

I turned to George. "Well, how about it, old man?" I said.

"Oh, I'm game if you are!" he replied. "But what about snowshoes and things?"

It seemed daft. Here were George and I, with our souls all keyed up and attuned to the tropics and Honolulu's coral strand, embarking upon an unexpected and totally irresponsible trip to Yukon and the Frozen North!

However, after some further discussion, it was so decided, and next morning, after a first-rate breakfast consisting of minced finnan haddock on toast and more toast and delicious coffee, we fixed it up with the C.P.R. on the telephone at short notice. Very short notice, for



VANCOUVER, B.C.

"Vancouver City . . . on an inlet of the Strait of Georgia."

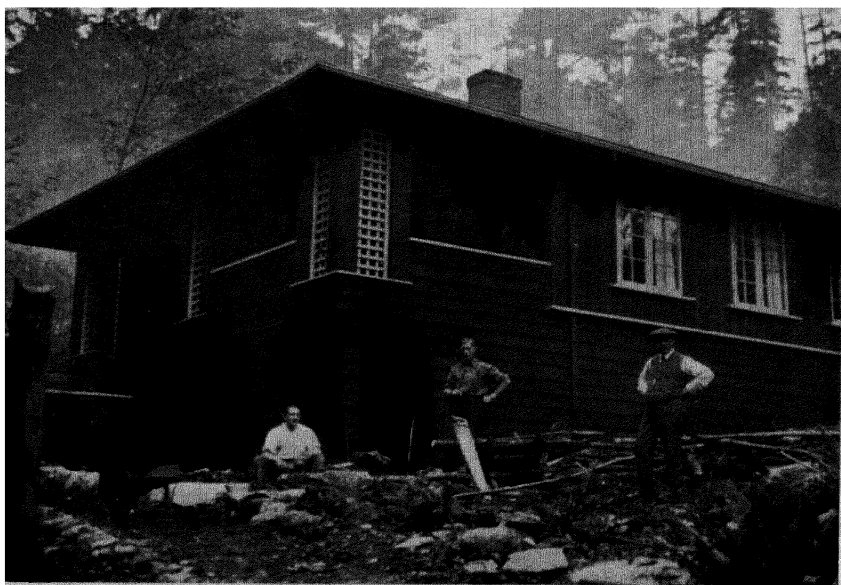
(see page 61)



BRITISH COLUMBIA

"... this lush and eager riot of vegetation."

(see page 62)



"... built on the hillside . . ."

(see page 63)

they informed us that one of their Alaska steamers, s.s. *Princess Mary*, was sailing at 10 p.m. that very same evening, but that there would be "no difficulty about accommodation" for us. George remarked gloomily that he never expected there would be, and that, as a matter of fact, he wouldn't be surprised to find that we were the only passengers crazy enough to be going to Alaska. However, he cheered up a little at the thought that, being a C.P.R. boat, the "table" was bound to be ample and good.

Gilling went in to town to look at his letters and book our passages, promising to be back for lunch. During his absence George and I had a stroll round, and made the acquaintance of Nash, who, to our surprise, turned out to be quite a young man. The term "naval pensioner" had somehow led us to expect a wrinkled old salt with a fringe of white whiskers round his weather-beaten face.

The poor fellow was, however, almost a complete cripple, which was not surprising when you heard his story. It seems that on the outbreak of war in 1914 he came to the Old Country to join up, and was drafted to a minesweeper. The vessel hit a mine and went up, the explosion blowing him thirty feet into the air and burying him beneath a pile of wreckage. A bare minute before the sweeper took its final plunge he was rescued in the nick of time by one of his shipmates, who was, for this deed, subsequently decorated with the Albert Medal. Nash remained unconscious for ten days, his more obvious injuries consisting of an extensive fracture of the skull, one arm and both legs broken, both feet crushed to pulp, and a jagged spar driven clean through one of his thighs. He was in hospital for one and a half years, and, returning to British Columbia, was now subsisting on a small pension and living in a little shack down on the beach. He hobbled round with the aid of a couple of sticks, and was of assistance to Gilling in many small ways, even helping him to extend the clearing round about the forest-beset house.

This work of felling trees and clearing the bush occupied

every moment of Gilling's spare time, and when he returned from Vancouver soon after noon he brought a Mr. Hood back with him to help. After a really first-rate lunch of tomato soup, canned roast beef and boiled potatoes, and fresh peaches—and here may I interrupt myself for a moment to remark that if I seem to be going into too much detail about food, I apologize, of course, but I do want to make it clear to any lady reader that although we were poor, lone men-things, *we fed well!*—*and* we washed up too! As I was saying, after we had lunched well and washed up very thoroughly, we sallied forth to battle with the “forest primeval”, grimly determined to give the “murmuring pines and the hemlocks” something to murmur about.

Gilling, Hood, George, Nash, myself and a Chinaman whom everyone called “Chow”, constituted the shock troops. Gilling and Hood, who were expert woodsmen, felled four trees one after the other in most professional style—three of them being quite large firs. Chow lopped off the branches of the felled trees and lugged them to two large fires built by Nash, who hobbled round tending them and generally pottering about.

Following Little Tommy Tucker's shining example, George and I, not being able—or allowed—to sing, cast about for work to do, and, on Gilling's suggestion, commenced to saw into short lengths the prone trunk of a cedar which had been felled some weeks ago. The tree was about three feet in diameter, and our implement was a two-handled cross-cut saw. George stood at one side and I stood at the other, pushing and pulling manfully, with the vivid red sawdust spurting regularly as the saw rasped to and fro. We managed to cut the whole tree into sections, each about two and a half feet long, but I will admit that the last few lengths taxed our aching shoulder muscles to the utmost. George said, as he mopped his brow: “Do you remember those lumber camp men, up the Ottawa River, sawing that tree down? They were working with the saw horizontal too—not vertical. Gosh! I take off my hat to them!”

As a change, we then split each short length, by means of a heavy iron wedge—"wedgee" Chow called it—and a sledge-hammer, into three equal V-shaped pieces, which in turn we chopped with a long-handled axe into smaller blocks measuring about five inches each way. These were destined subsequently to be burned in the sitting-room, which possessed a wide, old-fashioned English hearth with log-irons and an open chimney.

The day was fine but dull, and rather close, there being no breeze at all down in this pocket of the jungle. Both George and I perspired freely, but gladly, our streaming faces being tangible evidence of our desire to repay friend Gilling for his kindness and hospitality.

At half-past five, after a wash and a cup of tea, George and I, accompanied by Gilling, and with Chow carrying our suitcases, climbed the tilted cedar trunk and the steep path through the trees to Caulfeild station, where, after bidding Gilling good-bye and promising to get into touch with him again immediately on our return from Alaska, we hopped aboard the tiny motor-train and were soon in Vancouver City once more.

After a bath and a good dinner at the hotel, we collected our heavy baggage, took a taxi to the docks, and boarded the s.s. *Princess Mary* for our two-thousand mile voyage to Skagway and back.



CHAPTER EIGHT

NORTHWARDS TO ALASKA

THERE are three places in the world where, for hundreds of miles, the coasts present a jagged and indented appearance, and are fringed along their whole length with countless islands, large and small. They are the littoral of Norway, the coast of Alaska, and the southern portion of the seaboard of Chile—all of them, curiously enough, facing towards the West. So great a traveller as Sir W. M. Conway, writing of the Inside Passages which it is possible to navigate along these three picturesque coastlines, gives the palm to that of Alaska, relegating Norway to third place.

Until about thirty-five years ago—save for the pioneers who had fished its teeming coasts, trapped its furs, and panned the first gold along its creeks—Alaska was an unknown country. Outside of these sturdy old-timers, Alaska, with its side partner the Yukon, was hardly more than a geographical curiosity—a huge, unpopulated, unexplored, inhospitable block of land more than three quarters of a million square miles in size, forming the northern tip of the American Continent. It was generally looked upon as a land of perpetual winter, frozen permanently under snow and ice.

The discovery of gold in vast quantities in the Klondike in 1896, however, focused upon it the attention of the whole world, and the feverish stampede that followed was like nothing that had ever happened before or that has happened since.

In 1898 someone took a photograph of an everyday scene in the White Pass. It shows, struggling over the steep snow-clad wastes, a thin black streak nearly two miles long—a streak composed entirely of men making their way to Klondike, with nearly six hundred miles of incredible hardship still ahead of them. The Chilcoot Pass—the White Pass—names to bring a shudder to those who travelled that terrible road. Greed pulled them forward; the crowd behind pushed them onward; if they could not endure the strain they fell out and died where they lay. There was no mercy and no turning back. It was no place for weaklings, for not only was Nature hostile, but the lure of gold drew to the trail some of the most lawless and desperate men on the earth, and if it had not been for the swift justice meted out by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, it might have been said with even greater truth that

There's never a law of God or man
Runs North of Fifty-three.

“Devil take the hindmost” was the grim motto of that time. Men died horribly in the bitter blizzards, amongst the icy rapids, of sheer exhaustion, or by the hand of lawless men, and more than three thousand pack-animals were callously done to death on that ruthless and pitiless trail. Near the summit of White Pass, George and I were later to see a memorial erected by the ladies of the Golden North to these helpless victims of man's lust for gold.

Before turning in on the night we sailed, I abstracted a couple of Robert W. Service's books from the ship's small library and took them to bed with me. And I confess that their contents left me with the impression that George and I were in for a gruelling experience. In my mind I hastily ran over my wardrobe, and came to the conclusion that, if I wished to prevent myself from being frozen stiff, I should have to do most of my sight-seeing through the porthole of our cabin. By the same token George would see practically nothing, because there was only one porthole.

Things turned out quite differently, however, and the ordinary overcoats we had with us were amply sufficient. The explanation, I learned, lies in the fact that the warm Japan current, striking Vancouver Island, is deflected northwards and carries on up the Alaskan coast. Not that in winter, inland over the White Pass, it isn't cold! Far from it, indeed, as the pioneers knew to their bitter cost.

It was in the middle of the month of October when George and I went to Alaska, and the winter was beginning to tighten its grip. In the spacious and well-warmed saloons and cabins of the *Princess Mary*, however, we were as snug as possible, and throughout the whole voyage suffered no inconvenience at all, save perhaps from overheating.

George and I had a fine two-berth cabin, and when we were awakened next morning by the steward with tea and biscuits, he told us that it was raining. A glance through the porthole showed me that we were passing along the inner—the eastern—coastline of Vancouver Island, which was mountainous and covered with firs, spruce, hemlock, and cedar from the almost invisible summits to the beach.

It was not a particularly inspiring sight, so we decided to be thoroughly lazy and luxurious and have our breakfasts in bed. Perhaps our stiff backs, due to our tree-sawing operations at Gilling's place the day before, had something to do with it, though George said that, on principle, he always had his breakfast in bed the first morning on board any steamer, even if he were simply dying to get up, just to "break his steward in".

All day we coasted along the inner side of Vancouver Island, whose densely wooded slopes we were told sheltered plenty of game: brown bear, deer, and lynx. The waters of the narrow strait were dead calm, but at about seven p.m., as George and I were having a wash in our cabin prior to dinner, the *Princess Mary* began to move about in a most unladylike manner. We were passing out from Queen Charlotte Sound and from the lee of Vancouver Island into the open sea.

As a matter of fact, it was about the only bit of open sea we were to experience during the whole trip, but, at the time, this was no consolation at all to George, who is a bad sailor. The rollers of the open Pacific played increasing havoc with the *Princess*, who developed a most indecorous stagger, which swiftly became a frankly outrageous roll. She pitched as well as rolled, the two motions combining to produce a circular swooping movement, unsettling even to the most hard-boiled. George, with a moan, abandoned all hope of dinner, which was especially exasperating to him as, being ravenous, he had gone to the trouble of sneaking one of the menu cards to see what was on it. And in order that the reader may understand and perhaps sympathize a little with George's disappointment, I append a faithful copy of it :

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY.

s.s. *Princess Mary*.

DINNER.

Potage à la Sydney	Consommé
Boiled Deep-Sea Cod, Anchovy Sauce	
Chicken Salad	Sliced Tomatoes
Boiled Leg of Mutton, Caper Sauce	
Timbal of Sweetbread	
Roast Prime Rib Beef, Yorkshire Pudding	
Roast Goose, Apple Sauce	
Boiled and Mashed Potatoes	
Vegetables in Season	
Steamed Sultana Pudding, Vanilla Sauce	
Deep Apple Pie with Whipped Cream	
Lemon Ice Cream	
Crackers	Cheese
Tea	Fresh Fruit
	Assorted Cake
	Coffee

Oh, Shades of '98 .

But, after all, George was to enjoy his dinner. In less than an hour, as we passed into the lee of Calvert Island, the *Princess Mary*, bridleing and setting her bonnet straight, resumed the dignified gait proper to her exalted rank, and George, emerging pale but determined from the cabin, squared his elbows and managed to put away a most amazing quantity of food.

The next morning was dull at first, but later the sun broke through, and, apart from a cold north wind, it turned out a brilliant day. Hour after hour we threaded through narrow channels between islands large and small; skirted the mainland with its thickly-wooded mountains, whose summits, wreathed with fleecy white clouds, here and there showed glints of snow; and passed scores of deep inlets sheltering lumber camps and salmon canneries. George and I learned a good many interesting things about salmon on our return to Vancouver, and, therefore, beyond mentioning that we passed many canning plants, I will leave the subject until later.

In the late afternoon we reached Prince Rupert—the people who give names to geographical features in British Columbia evidently have highly developed royalist tendencies—and George and I went ashore at once. The town is built on rocky ground lying at some altitude above sea-level, and we had to climb quite a long flight of steps to reach it. The first thing that impressed me was the superabundance of wood. The houses and shops were of wood; the pavements—sidewalks—were of wood; even the roads leading from the town were also of wood. These roads were extraordinary. Acting on our steward's advice, we took a motor-bus from the town to a place named Cold Harbour, and the way to it led over one of these astonishing raised wooden tracks. It was built of stout planks raised some six feet or so above ground-level on strong wooden pillars and trestles. It is an ingenious way of saving money and labour and solving a very difficult problem, for the fact is that the ground is so covered with outcrops of rock and so thickly studded with the stumps of sawn-off forest trees, that with the unlimited supply of timber available, it has been found more easy and economical to build a continuous bridge over all these obstructions than to dig them out and remove them.

These trestle roads wind about all over the countryside with small wooden pathways branching off at intervals, leading to isolated wooden shacks on either side.

Every yard of our ride was accompanied by a steady

rumble as the tyres drummed over the planks, but before long we sighted Cold Harbour and smelt the business upon which it was engaged, namely, the handling, freezing, storage, and despatch of the millions of halibut caught on the fishing-banks.

Prince Rupert is the terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, and is, on this account, an important centre of the enormous fishing industry of British Columbia, whose output is more than double that of the Nova Scotian fisheries, some thirty-seven million dollars' worth of capital being employed.

We had no time to inspect the plant, but we saw the white-painted sheds, plumed with clouds of steam, lying across an inlet on whose placid waters floated scores of great logs almost swamped beneath the weight of hundreds of expectant seagulls.

Fellow travellers with us in the bus were a young couple whom we had noticed on the boat. As is always the way, one passes and repasses fellow passengers on a steamer perhaps for days—maybe for a whole voyage—without speaking, but the moment one meets the same people on shore amidst strange surroundings, one smiles and smirks and greets them almost as long-lost friends. That is the tendency, I mean. There are people, of course, whom on shore one not only fails to greet, but from whom one flees madly up a back street.

Captain and Mrs. Maurice Cressy-Marckx—I quote from memory of their visiting-card—were not at all of this kind, however. On the contrary, they were a charming young couple, most obviously on their honeymoon, which fact made me feel especially compassionate and pitiful towards them.

Ah me!—so much to learn!

I think, if you will allow me, I should like to quote verbatim here a passage from my diary.

October 14th. Met Mr. and Mrs. Cressy-Marckx. Extraordinary type of girl. Warm-hearted and impulsive to a degree and crazy for new experiences and sensations. A good thing her husband is very much in love with her as she must be dam difficult to live with.

A tremendous talker and rather alarmingly excitable and exuberant. Both going to Java for a year on business. Wife wants to buy a dog-team and take the trail up into the Arctic Circle. Hubby not so keen. A girl possessing any amount of grit, with an ardent spirit too big for her frail body.

Those are the words I wrote some years ago, and it is perhaps interesting to note in passing that Mrs. Cressy-Marckx is to-day a well-known explorer and a familiar figure on British lecture platforms.

We rumbled back to Prince Rupert, and when Mrs. C.-M. caught sight of a Chop Suey restaurant nothing would satisfy her but that we should all go in and have tea there. Now, as a matter of fact, you cannot get tea—not tea as we know it—in a Prince Rupert Chop Suey restaurant, a thing that even Mrs. C.-M. must have realized when she came to drink it. But nothing could damp her enthusiasm, not even the tea. Humouring her, we played our part manfully; we made pleased noises, and, with tightly-clamped gullets, went through the motions of swallowing the hellish brew.

Things were, however, looking pretty black, when George had a brain-wave which saved our faces—and our digestions. He suddenly looked at his wrist-watch, shook it violently, exclaimed that it had stopped and that we must hurry, and incontinently bolted for the door. As if sucked into the vacuum created by his flying exit we followed him into the street—the Captain pausing just long enough to pay for our, and his, experience.

There was a wonderful sunset that night, and as we left Prince Rupert the serrated peaks of Queen Charlotte Island in the west, floating on an opal sea, were etched in black against the flaming orange of the evening skies.



CHAPTER NINE

THE ALASKAN COAST

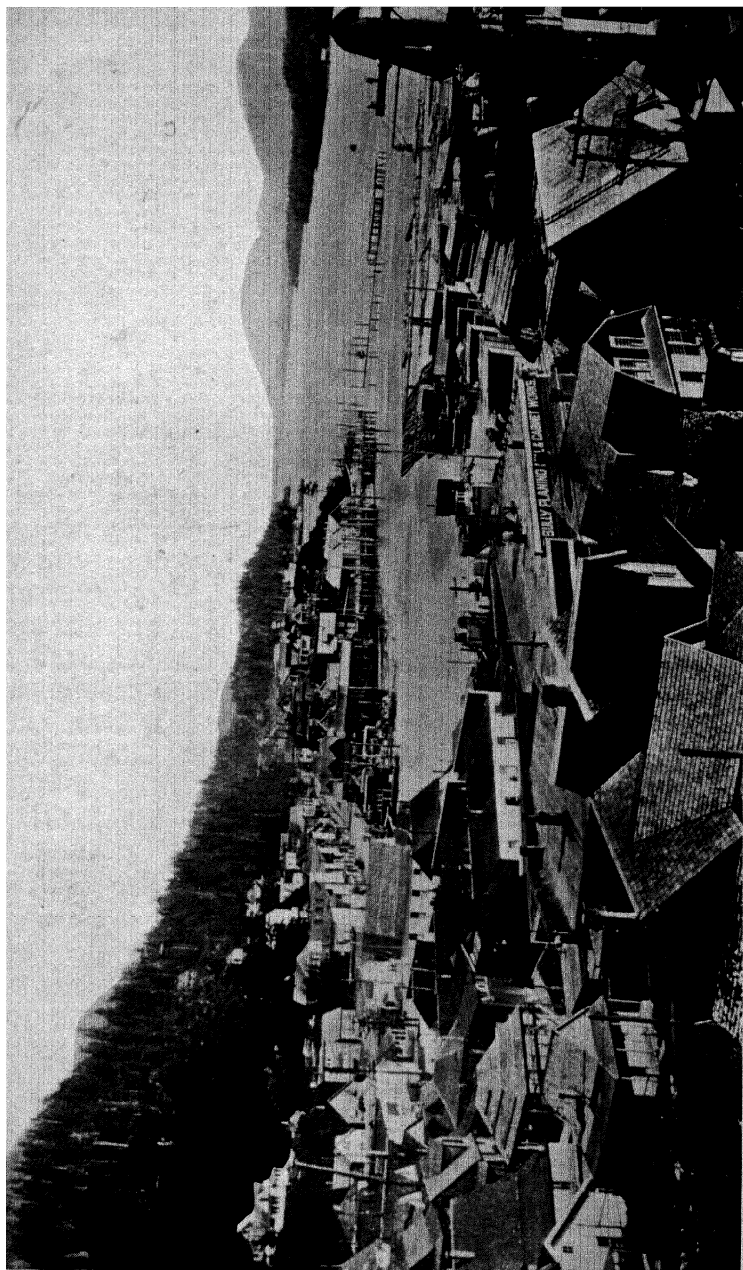
WHEN we awakened next morning we were already at anchor in Ketchikan harbour, the southernmost town in Alaska.

I must freely confess that it was a complete surprise to me to learn that we were now in waters belonging to the United States of America, and that if we wished to go ashore we should have to pass through the U.S. Customs and show our passports. Up till then I was distinctly under the impression that all that coastline belonged to Canada, and in some vague and quite inexplicable way I felt so aggrieved to be told the contrary that I rang the bell for the steward again, and asked him if he could bring me some literature about it, which he did.

After perusing a booklet or two I was driven to the conclusion that there could be no possible doubt about it. It seems that the region now known as Alaska was first visited by two Russians—Captains Bering and Chirikov—as far back as 1741. Many traders and trappers followed in their footsteps, and Russia occupied and exploited the country until, in 1867, the United States purchased it from them outright for the sum of \$7,200,000.

Ketchikan, an Indian name meaning “The town under the Eagle”, is one of the most prosperous towns in Alaska, for besides its great salmon and halibut industry, it is also a mining centre for copper, gold, platinum, silver, and lead.

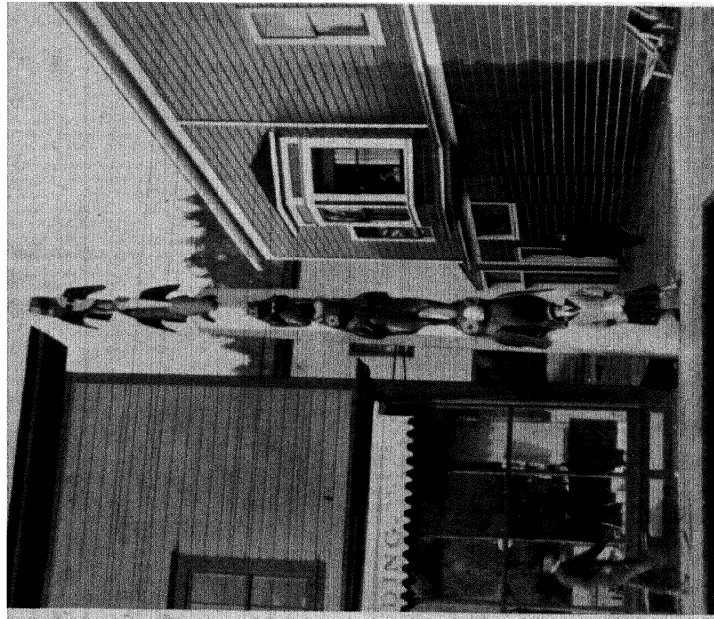
Our call was only a very brief one, being mainly a



ALASKA

“ . . . Ketchikan—the southernmost town in Alaska . . . ”

(see page 76)



"She was standing in front of an Indian totem-pole."

(see page 77)

WRANGELL, ALASKA.



"... with the disembowelled haddocks for a background."

(see page 80)

formal one to conform with maritime law, and, as everything was smothered under a dense white fog, George and I took Ketchikan for granted and breakfast in bed.

We were away again at 8.30 a.m., and as we proceeded the weather steadily improved until, a couple of hours later, we suddenly burst into bright sunlight from the fog which, on looking back, we perceived standing like a sheer white wall behind us.

The sunlight revealed mountains all round us, more rugged and considerably higher than those we had yet seen, and in the middle afternoon there opened out ahead of us a massive range covered with deep snow, which shone blinding white against the background of blue sky. Gradually we drew nearer, and then, swinging eastwards, steamed down an inlet whose glassy surface mirrored with amazing fidelity every shining peak and shadowed ravine.

And so we approached Wrangell, a town of wooden houses set at the foot of two fir-clad hills between which glittered one lonely snow-clad pinnacle.

Joining forces with the gallant Captain and his eager-eyed bride, we went ashore, and within two minutes she was standing stockstill, practically incoherent with excitement and enthusiasm, in front of a tall pillar of wood carved and painted in a peculiar manner; in other words, an Indian totem pole.

These extraordinary relics of Indian mythology are one of the features of the Alaskan coast, and several very well-preserved examples are to be found in Wrangell. They are not idols or deities, and they were never worshipped. They are simply pictorial records of Indian history, genealogy, and mythology. Some of them represent the Raven, the Eagle, the Killer-whale, and the Wolf, which are the several emblems of the largest social groups in the Indian nation. The Bear, the Frog, the Sea-lion, the Beaver, the Thunder-bird, and many others which are found pictorially represented on these poles, are the crests of various clans; coats of arms, as it were.

Battles and other notable events are also commemorated on totem poles, and a man who wishes to ridicule a

rival may represent him head downwards on whatever pole he may erect.

In the old days there were many native artists of great repute who were hired to carve poles to order, and massive logs were the canvases on which they drew their strange pictures. When the carving was finished a *pot-latch*, or feast of commemoration, was held, when lavish presents were made to the guests, whose duty it was to memorize the symbols and add them to their mental store of Indian heraldry.

Whilst we are on the subject of totem poles, perhaps a few notes about the Indians themselves will not come amiss.

The Alaskan Indians are strikingly different from other North American Indians. Indeed, it is more than possible that they are not strictly Indians at all, but a race apart, with strong Mongolian characteristics. Their ancestors may quite easily have come from the west over the sea or across the Bering Straits. The name "Siwash", by which they are known, is merely a corruption of the French word *savage*.

There are really five distinct races of Alaskan Indians, speaking totally different languages. The Tlingit Indians, who still inhabit the coastline, are, as would be expected, essentially fisher-folk, and their dug-out canoes stand to them precisely as did the horse to the buffalo-hunting Indians of the prairies. They were bold, venturesome and cruel, and even to this day are fond of relating tales of battle and of raids of the not too distant past. They were keen and thrifty, of fine physique, and their numbers were considerable, but now, as is the case with most native races, they are passing away and their mystical legends and virile qualities are becoming, alas, a thing of the past.

Wrangell is a most attractive little town, the wooden houses being painted in bright colours and the boarded streets kept surprisingly clear of all refuse.

At lunch-time the Captain of the *Princess Mary* told Mrs. C.-M. that if she wanted to see some real Indian

curios she ought to visit the house of old Chief Shake, and, of course, as soon as we landed, this had to be our first objective. After dragging her gently away from the totem pole in the main street, we wandered along, looking for the chief's house and making enquiries until we finally located it a short distance out of the town on an island in a small creek. The only local inhabitants in sight were three small Indian boys with a fawn-coloured "huskie" pup, but on enquiring from them as to how we were to cross to the island we drew a complete blank. They understood no English, and George's most graphic pantomime met with no response save delighted giggles and shouts of appreciation. George and his eye-glass were something they had never even hoped to see.

Espying a small boat, the enterprising bride sprang towards it with a glad cry, and beckoned us eagerly to follow. On closer inspection it revealed itself as a flat-bottomed craft, incredibly filthy, practically a wreck, and half full of water. George, peering at it through his monocle, classified it at once as one of the chief's exhibits.

Nothing daunted, however, Mrs. C.-M. stepped aboard and we followed her gingerly, the Captain and I halting only long enough to pick up, for paddling purposes, two thin boards which were lying on the bank. The launch was a difficult one, but the hulk finally floated, and you must picture the four of us standing in single file on the submerged bottom of this galleass, whilst the Captain in front and I at the rear scratched furiously at the water with our bits of wood in order to make progress.

The procession moved slowly but safely across the lake, and we grounded and landed on the islet, only to find that Chief Shake had gone away from home and had taken the key. Round at the back, however, we came across a number of very ancient totem poles, which, we learned later, were more than two hundred years old and had been erected over the graves of a hundred Indians who had been, for some reason, burnt alive.

We also discovered a small tent on a platform at the back of the house, in which rows of finnan haddocks were

hanging to smoke over a fire which, like Chief Shake, had also gone out, and Mrs. C.-M. insisted on my taking a photo of her squatting tailor-fashion and grasping an axe, with the disembowelled haddocks for a background.

Having seen all we could, there was nothing for it but to embark once more in the felucca and essay the return voyage. This we did, and all went well until we were comparatively close to port. At this moment the Captain, letting fly with a savage dig at the water as a final triumphant effort, missed it altogether, and, overbalancing, stepped heavily backwards on to George, who was standing just behind him and gazing blandly through his eye-glass at the approaching shore.

This was more than the ancient galliot could stand. With a splintering crash the whole of the bottom fell out and the four of us sank, still in single file, until our feet touched the shallow mud bottom, the encircling remains of the infernal bum-boat rising as we sank and finally coming to rest gently beneath our armpits.

There was a moment of shocked silence, and then the gallant Captain, waving his oar-board above his head, cried, "*En avant, mes enfants !*" and with one accord we moved forward—forward and upward—until the wreckage grounded and we stepped ashore over its disreputable bows.

Into what further adventures the insatiable bride would have led us I cannot tell, because at that moment the steamer's siren hooted a warning of impending departure, and we therefore had to rejoin her at the double—our squelching passage through Wrangell's main shopping street causing much astonishment and leaving a trail of dirty water for all to see.

At five-thirty we were once more under way.

That evening the sunset was again a magnificent one, the whole range of snow peaks blushing rose-red, whilst the foothills beneath them showed as an intensely dark purple mass.

Later in the evening we entered Wrangell Narrows, and twisted a tortuous way between pine-clad islands so

close on each side that we could easily have tossed a pebble on either shore. At one point, almost the narrowest, another vessel coming south—the *Seattle*—disputed the passage, and we had to draw aside very carefully and stop the engines to allow the two boats to pass each other. The *Seattle* made a wonderful picture—and no doubt we did her the same service—as she crept past us, blazing with lighted portholes and windows from stem to stern, with every light mirrored just as brilliantly in the black water.

At about 10 p.m. we began to meet floating ice—I see a note in my diary reading: “Just bumped a baby berg”—and the searchlight was brought into play. The blazing shaft of light pierced the darkness, ever and again picking out the white mass of a floating berg—which looked for all the world like a piece of camphor floating on a pool of ink.

Half hidden by the sleeping islands the midnight sun hung low in the sky, blood-red.



CHAPTER TEN

GLACIERS AND GOLD

To the roamer there is no music so sweet as that of the steady trampling of a steamer's engines. It matters little in what direction the vessel is travelling, the simple fact that one is on the move from one place to some other place being good enough.

Yet, on the first night at sea, when the traveller, seasoned though he may be, lays his head upon the pillow to woo sleep, some little time elapses before the rhythmic thudding of the engines ceases to be a disturbance and becomes instead a soothing lullaby.

Imperceptibly, however, the pulsing of the pistons becomes woven into the very fabric of one's ship-board life, so that any unforeseen cessation, or even slowing of the rhythm, immediately and subconsciously causes questioning and disquiet. At first you do not know what is amiss—for what reason conditions are different from what they were a moment ago—and it is only after a time that the truth becomes apparent. You say to yourself: "The engines have stopped!" and your heart gives a little leap. And quick on the heels of realization comes the question: "Why?" Urgently and insistently: "*Why?*"

George and I were fast asleep when the engines of the *Princess Mary* slowed and stopped soon after the dawn, and the unfamiliar silence awakened me. Everything was strangely still save for the quiet whisper of the ripples against the vessel's hull. No deck engines chattered and clacked; no derricks squeaked; no feet tramped the deck overhead.

Silence complete and profound.

I slipped out of my berth and looked through the porthole—and looked, and looked.

There is, to my mind, something almost uncanny about a glacier. Tilted tense and rigid between its holding valleys, I think of it as a living thing, only waiting for the moment to come when, with a roar, its millions of tons of ice shall tear themselves free and go crashing downwards in one colossal and earth-shaking avalanche.

I was gazing at the Taku Glacier. A mile wide and a hundred feet thick, the Taku Glacier comes down from a vast snowfield far in the interior. Seen as I saw it in the dawn of the day, framed like a glittering jewel in the porthole of my cabin, it was a very wonderful sight.

Its myriad facets flashed and glittered in the morning sun, whose slanting rays pierced and lit within it a living blue-green transparency, and deepened the shadows in its crevasses and its ice-caverns to purest indigo.

George's voice made itself heard behind me, enquiring querulously why I was standing there in the middle of Alaska in my bare feet getting my death of cold and blocking out the fresh air. I replied that anyone whose higher nature was so atrophied that he could snore at the Taku Glacier jolly well deserved to be stifled to death, and I also added that I was trying to find my best tie which I had noticed he was wearing the previous day.

For some little time the steamer drifted about in front of the glacier, which closes the end of the inlet with its bulk, and during this period we saw, and heard, dozens of small icebergs break off from the parent body and drift towards us. "Calving", the steward called it.

At the end of half an hour the engines started up again, and, swinging round, we steamed up the Gastineau Channel to Juneau, which we reached about an hour later—Juneau, the capital of Alaska, the residence of the Governor, and the seat of all Government departments. Built partly on piles over the water and partly on the bare rock, it is a bustling and prosperous-looking city.

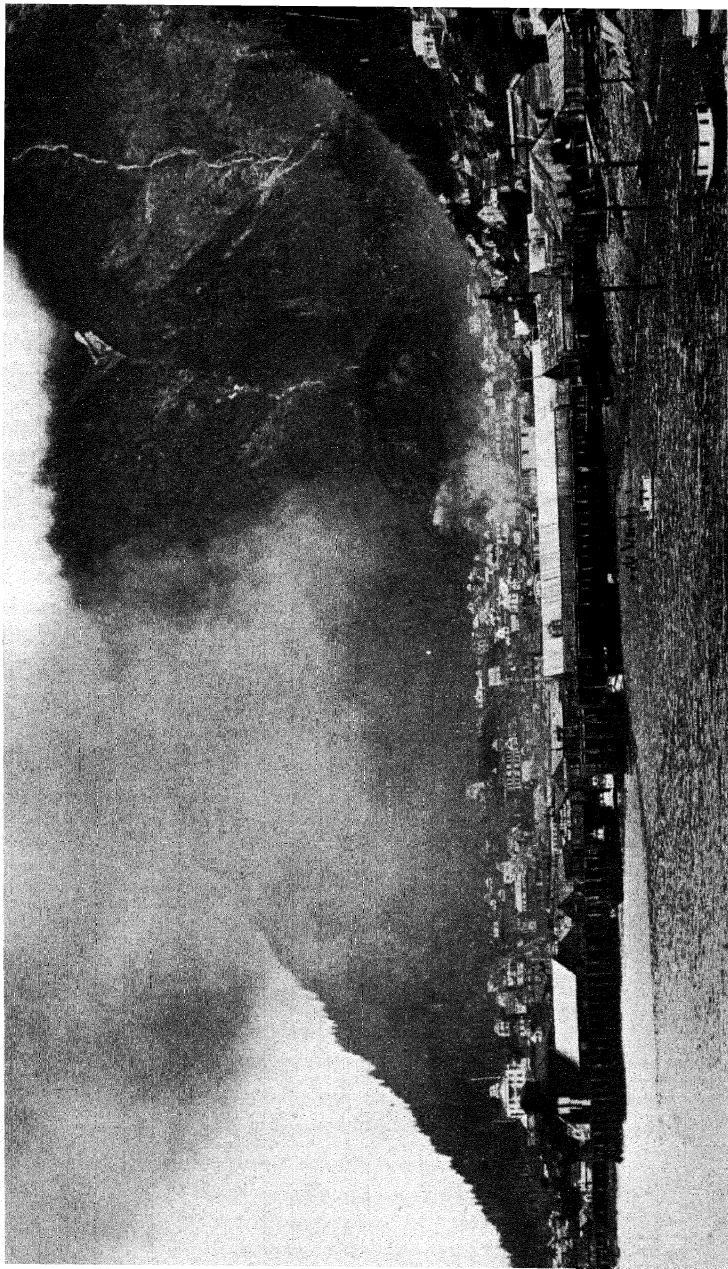
George and I and the Cressy-Marckx went ashore

together as usual, and took a stroll through the town.

Up to the time when I made this trip, my general conception of Alaska, like that of most people, I suspect, was rather a highly coloured one due to the "red-blooded he-man" type of literature which seems to centre round it. It therefore seemed a little incongruous to find milliners' shops, displaying crêpe-de-Chine nighties and undies of the most flimsy and diaphanous description. One almost looked for the arrival in town from the diggings of a bunch of roaring buck miners, and the subsequent shooting, accompanied by gargantuan laughter, of more holes in the lingerie than even the makers provided. But, alas for the eager hopes of the starry-eyed bride, those great days are over, and the miners we saw looked more like Corporation dustmen. Even the old-time "saloon" is gone, for Alaska, like the United States, now bends the knee to Pussyfoot, and no more the elbow to good fellowship. At least, that is the great idea; but, of course, there *are* ways . . .

We took a road up a very steep hill, paved with boards, leading out of the town up the mountain-side, and proceeded until we came to a stretch where the plank roadway and the footpath adjoining it were built out from the sheer mountain face on timber brackets. Here and there the planks had completely rotted away, an added hazard which only caused Mrs. C.-M.'s eyes to sparkle with pleasurable zest.

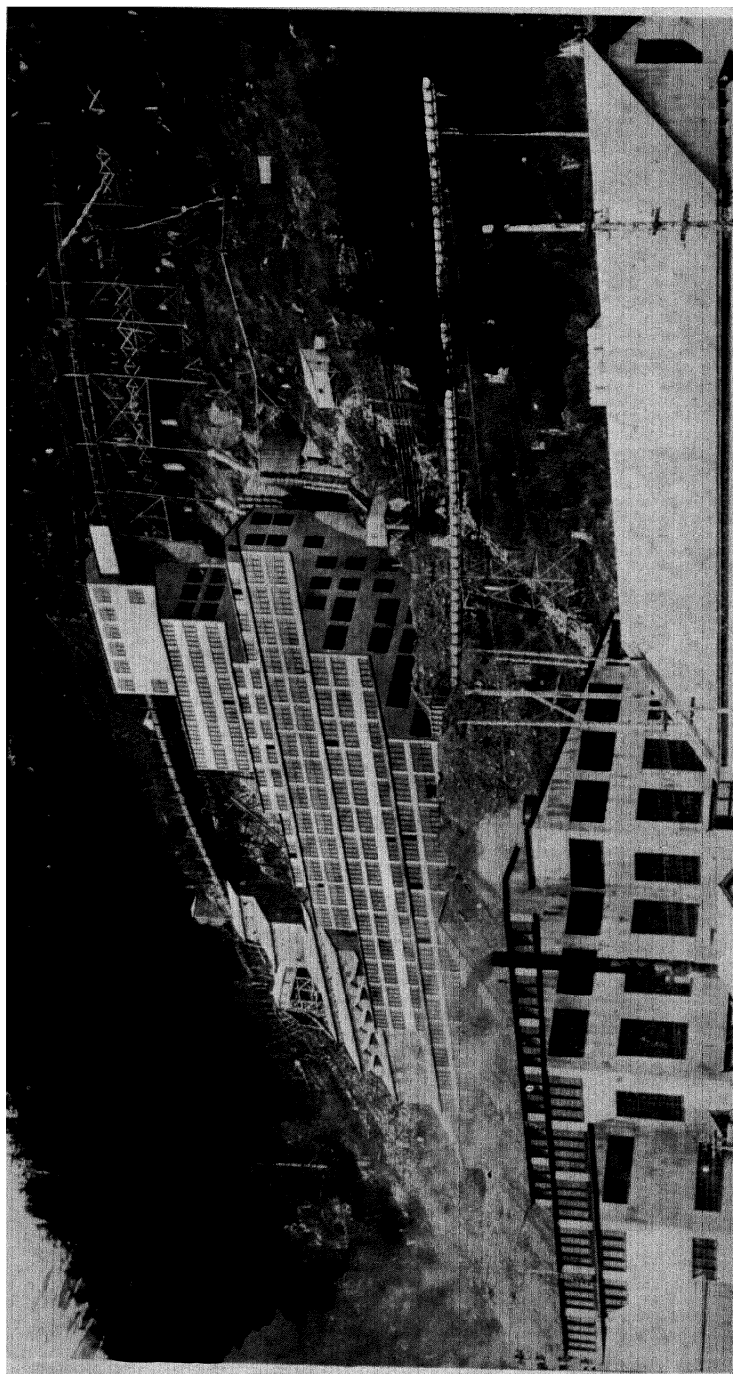
On rounding the shoulder of the precipice there opened out a wonderful panorama of snow-capped mountains and tumbling torrents of pea-green glacier water. Below us was a deep ravine, and at the bottom of it, lying on their sides, on their ends, and even completely upside down, were a dozen or so wooden houses, once decent dwellings on the mountain-side, whose pile supports had, at some unspecified time, given way and allowed them to roll over and over down to destruction. Of course, Mrs. C.-M. at once speculated enviously as to whether the occupants were inside the houses when they collapsed,



JUNEAU, ALASKA.

"Built partly on piles and partly on the bare rock . . ."

(see page 83)



JUNEAU, ALASKA.

" . . . the gold-crushing mills whose great sheds . . . tier upon tier . . . "

but as there was no one about to enquire from, we were unable to satisfy her unhealthy curiosity.

After quite a decent lunch in one of the restaurants labelled "Eats", I managed to secure a special permit for us all to look over the gold-crushing mills of the Alaska Juneau Gold Mining Company, whose great sheds, rising in tier upon tier of glass windows up the side of a mountain, had captivated my attention and interest as soon as we arrived.

We climbed up a long, long wooden stair totally enclosed like a tube. It was perfectly straight from top to bottom, and when one turned round and looked down its dwindling perspective a feeling of intense dizziness and insecurity was produced. We had been warned about this by the janitor at the bottom, but who ever listens to advice? His caution not to turn round and look down was a direct invitation to do so, of course. But he was quite right—it was actually dangerous.

At the top, still another weary climb awaited us, up innumerable ladders and stairways through the sheds until we reached the very topmost shed of all, where we could see the beginning of the process which extracts the precious metal from the crude ore. The ore itself is quarried from the mountains in the interior and conveyed on trucks, operated by electricity, to this topmost shed. We could see the truck-line, supported on, seemingly, the most airy and flimsy of trestles, curving and winding its way round the shoulders of the hills. On arrival at the top shed, the trucks were run, four at a time, into a large cylindrical tube, which was open at the top, and in which was mechanism designed to grip and hold the trucks. The cylinder then slowly turned completely over on its own axis, tipping the contents of the trucks into a dump below. The ore then passed into grinders, from which it emerged in small pieces on a travelling belt, which fed it again into revolving drums containing a number of loose iron balls, whose pulverizing action ground it down still finer. There were three sets of these drums, coarse, medium, and fine, the size of drum and of ball dwindling

at each stage. Each of these successive operations was carried through at progressively lower levels, and we followed them downwards by the stairs and ladders up which we had climbed and panted so laboriously.

From the third and last of the drums the now finely powdered ore passed to the slightly tilted washing tables or trays, which were grooved longitudinally, shaken to and fro mechanically, and over which a gentle stream of water was continually passing.

A highly magnetized metal inset on these trays retained any fragments of precious metal or even any ore containing metal, but allowed the waste material to be washed away. There were three sets in all of these trays, and on the last one the concentrated metallurgical substance appeared in the form of a blackish paste, with here and there the sparkle of yellow metal. This was packed into tiny bags—tiny because the stuff is extremely heavy—and sent to the smelters and refiners for final treatment. The chief metals contained in powder form in this paste are gold, silver, and lead, and it is worth about \$200 a ton. As a matter of fact, the ore dealt with in this mill was low-grade, and unless working costs were pared down to the irreducible minimum, it would not pay for treating. For this reason human labour had been eliminated almost entirely, and practically the whole process was carried out automatically by electrically operated machinery.

Mrs. C.-M.'s spirits, which had soared sky-high at the exhilarating prospect of seeing a gold-crushing mill actually at work, sank lower and lower just as she herself did, as we descended ladder and stair, following the processes down to their completion on the bottom floor of all. Even the glint of gold particles in the final paste failed to rouse her. It was all so unimaginative, this dull machinery. A fraud, that's what it was—not even one little tiny teeny weeny nugget.

With muted voices we thanked the mill officials and returned to the *Princess Mary*—the outraged bride walking haughtily in advance and we three despicable men skulk-

ing, with bowed heads and hang-dog mien, behind. Arrived on board, the lady flounced below, and the Captain, shaking his head dolefully, followed her into their state-room. Therefrom, for some considerable time, the sound of her fluting treble and his placatory murmurs filtered down the corridor.

Meanwhile George and I, escaping, attended the steamer's departure, and, with elbows on rail, watched the panorama of snow-crested mountains unfurl and lift and take more majestic shape whilst Juneau, capital city of Alaska, dwindled and receded to an insignificant huddle of sheds at their foot; watched, too, as we swung out of the inlet and headed north once more, the stately passing of an iceberg, transformed by the westering sun into a floating Rhapsody in Blue.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

SKAGWAY AND THE YUKON TRAIL

THE altered plans which Mrs. Captain Maurice Cressy-Marckx announced triumphantly at breakfast-time next morning were, I feel quite certain, a direct outcome of the gold-crushing fiasco of the previous day.

Baulked of her nuggets, she had reverted to her dog-team proposal, and, pressing her advantage, had overcome her husband's halting objections. Up to now their intention, like ours, had been to make the round trip on the same boat, staying only a bare forty-eight hours in Skagway whilst the *Princess Mary* turned round. But Mrs. C.-M. now announced that they had decided to leave the ship at Skagway and return on her next trip in about a fortnight's time. To all of these things the gallant Captain smiled a sickly acquiescence, and, even as we digested this information and sipped our final cup of breakfast coffee, the *Princess Mary* reached Skagway and tied up to the long wooden wharf.

Skagway, set against a background of snow-mountains which enclose it like a cup, is a town that has loomed large in the history of the Northland. When the gold rush commenced in 1896 the landing was made, not at Skagway, but at Dyea, and from there the trail led inland over the dreaded Chilcoot Pass. But about twelve months later word came of the discovery of the White Pass route, and immediately fifteen thousand men left Dyea and crowded into Skagway, which arose, almost overnight, from a few huts in a swamp into a roaring town full of

urgent gold-seekers and the human carrion that battened upon them. The "Trail of '98" led over the White Pass, and Skagway was the point of departure.

But to-day Skagway is a law-abiding town, and the bad old days live only in the memories of the few old-timers who remain, sobered somewhat and mellowed by the passage of time.

Such an one was—and still is, I hope—Mrs. Pullen, of Pullen's Hotel, who had come down to meet the boat in a protesting Ford car and a wonderful fur coat. For me, Skagway and its mountains were dwarfed into insignificance by Mrs. Pullen and Mrs. Pullen's fur coat. The lady herself was of jovial mien, and her great voice boomed greeting, advice, and encouragement to us all from afar. She was built on the lines of one of the larger gasometers, and her magnificent form was swathed in the most remarkable fur coat it has ever been my privilege to see. Practically every known species of fur-bearing animal in Alaska and the areas further North must have contributed a pelt to that monument of the furrier's art. Magnificent! Stupendous!—Mrs. Cressy-Marckx gazed at her spellbound. Here, at long last, was The Real Thing.

In some miraculous manner all five of us managed to pile into the long-suffering Ford, whose springs, nevertheless, sagged alarmingly, and Mrs. Pullen drove us, rumbling, over the mile-long wooden wharf, through the town, to her hotel, which proved itself to be not only a very comfortable hostelry serving gargantuan meals, but also a veritable museum of trophies—snowshoes, guns, bowie-knives, revolvers, Indian work and curios; and a picture-gallery whose walls were hung, literally, with hundreds of photographs—photographs of Madame herself in her prime and a score of costumes and poses, of Madame's grandparents, her mother and father, her cousins and half cousins, and of her numerous strapping sons in all kinds of garb, ceremonial, everyday, and sporting. All the school certificates and all the prize diplomas of all her sons were also framed and displayed. George looked to see if Mrs. Pullen's birth certificate and marriage

lines were also on the walls, but for some reason was unsuccessful.

In one of the rooms was a wonderfully interesting collection of actual gambling paraphernalia which Madame had salvaged from various gambling-halls and saloons and dance-halls when the town was finally "cleaned up": roulette tables, billiard tables, automatic poker-hand gambling machines, craps tables, and so on.

At lunch George and I fell in with a grizzled Major of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and during the meal and afterwards in the smoke-room he regaled us with many stories of his command—of lean, hard-bitten men of the Police, quiet, self-reliant and almost monosyllabic, who live in isolated posts in the Far North, patrolling their lonely beats, and, on word received, tracking their "man" for weeks—and months if necessary—through the icy wilderness, but "getting" him at the last.

The Major himself was a fine example of the breed. Lean, keen, with deep lines about the eyes from squinting in the snow-glare, his face, that was tanned to the colour of mahogany, and his grizzled hair completed the picture of a man trained to endure any hardship. His type and sort are of the salt of the earth.

He told us, too, of the early days in Skagway when it was the starting point for the Klondike, the resort of the scum of the earth, and when the dance-halls, saloons, and gambling-places ran wide open for the full twenty-four hours. Of one particular notability he had a good deal to say, being led thereto, possibly, by the fact that in Pullen's Hotel are preserved some souvenirs of the rascal.

"Soapy Smith" was the gentleman's name, so-called from his habit of wrapping a ten-dollar bill round a shaving-stick, parcelling it up, and selling the lot for one dollar to an optimist—subsequently disclaiming all responsibility, of course, when the deluded purchaser failed to find the "tenspot".

Trained in the open spaces where men are men, "Soapy" introduced to Skagway all the more robust arts of the

portage and prairie, including the use of the bowie-knife, the shot from the hip, and the fifth ace. He muscled in to Skagway and quickly became its uncrowned king. But perhaps "muscled" is wrong; the word "insinuated" would be better, because he was a most inoffensive-looking man with a quiet but persuasive manner. He gathered round him a gang, however, of some three hundred of the worst "toughs" in North America. They levied toll in broad daylight on any stranger they happened to meet, simply holding them up and clearing them out of all their money and portable property. I think Soapy must have possessed a grim sense of humour too, for I perceive glimmerings of it in the story that follows. A gallant parson—the Major said he was a Wesleyan—whose presence in Skagway at that time was certainly a tribute to his faith and his pluck, wished to erect a church, although, as the Major commented, the need for this was not very apparent because no one stayed—or lived—long enough in Skagway to attend Church services. However, the parson was very keen, and, plucking up his courage, actually dared to approach Soapy Smith himself and ask for a subscription. No doubt, when he actually stood face to face with the redoubtable king of Skagway, he marvelled to himself at his courage, but he marvelled still more when Soapy, with an oleaginous smile, handed him \$200. Further than this, Soapy encouraged him to persevere with the good work, and told him that if, when he had exhausted all the likely donors, the total sum collected was not sufficient for his purpose, he, Soapy Smith, would very likely make up the amount to what was necessary.

Flushed with gratification, the parson sallied forth, and, as can be imagined, with Soapy's name heading the subscription list, he did very well indeed. Ten days later he again presented himself before the great man.

"Well," said Soapy, "have you got together all you wanted?"

"No, Mr. Smith, not quite," smiled the parson.

"How much have you got?" quoth Soapy.

"About three thousand dollars, counting your subscription," replied the parson.

"Wahll," drawled Soapy, rising to his feet and producing his formidable six-shooter, "I guess you'd better just hand it all over to me, 'kaze we ain't requiring no churches in this burg."

Soapy's action was absolutely indefensible, of course, and I deplore it, but I cannot withhold a certain amount of admiration for his quick-wittedness.

Soon after this episode, however, Soapy's gang "stuck" a mining engineer named Reed, who proved of sterner stuff than the average. Reed announced that he intended to argue the point with Soapy himself, and "argument" in those days meant only one thing. Soapy was warned by his henchmen, and he realized that either he or the engineer were "for it" at their first meeting.

The very next day Reed, who must have been keeping watch, followed Soapy down to the wharf; Soapy caught sight of him; they both drew; two shots rang out simultaneously, and both men fell stone dead.

As the Major finished his tale he rose, and, beckoning us to follow, pointed out to us amongst the scores of other pictures on the wall of the hotel porch a remarkably clear photograph of Soapy Smith's corpse, taken in the morgue, showing him clad in the full regalia of evening dress. And, as we gazed at this rather gruesome exhibit, the Major murmured that, according to Dame Rumour, the king of Skagway, at the height of his power, was by no manner of means indifferent to the opulent charms of Madame Pullen herself.

Soapy was buried close by in the cemetery, and his grave is a Mecca for visitors to this day. There is also a rather futile imitation skull of large dimensions, labelled "Soapy Smith's Skull", fixed in the rock wall facing the platform at the station.

In the early afternoon George and I, accompanied by the Major, who was going to Dawson and beyond, took the little train which runs up and over the once dreaded White Pass and connects up at White Horse with

the steamers which ply down the Lewes River and the linked lakes to Dawson City and the Klondike. We had no time to go further than White Horse, but even so we managed to see a surprising number of interesting things.

The train was a short one, but the carriages were comfortable and there was an observation platform at the rear just as on the Trans-Canada expresses.

The track commenced to climb immediately we left the station, and very soon was winding round gorges and along the brink of deep canyons, with an astonishing number of waterfalls to be seen. All the way up White Pass we climbed through an empty and practically vertical wilderness, and falls hung white over their precipices on every side. So many were they, in fact, that whenever the train halted, panting, at a little station, the roar of them was like the sound in a shell held to the ear.

On the way up White Pass we looked down and saw, at the foot of Dead Horse Gulch—name of sinister significance—the site of the once busy “city” of White Pass. The Major told us that only a few years ago one could still see the bleaching bones of the dead horses that gave the gulch its name, and—which we found intensely interesting—he was able to point out to us clearly visible portions of the actual Trail of '98—a footwide rut up a steep and narrowing ravine. In places rock-slides had wiped it out, but at quite a number of points could still be seen, even from the passing train, the trail trodden out with bitterness and weariness by the vanished seekers after quick fortune.

Near the summit of White Pass, by the side of the railway track, the Major drew our attention to the memorial, erected to the thousands of dead pack-animals, to which I have previously referred. At White Pass summit, lying under a deep covering of snow and nearly three thousand feet above Skagway, twenty miles away, we passed from United States territory into British Columbia, and at a tiny wooden station a bronze tablet and two tall slender flagstaffs, flying respectively the

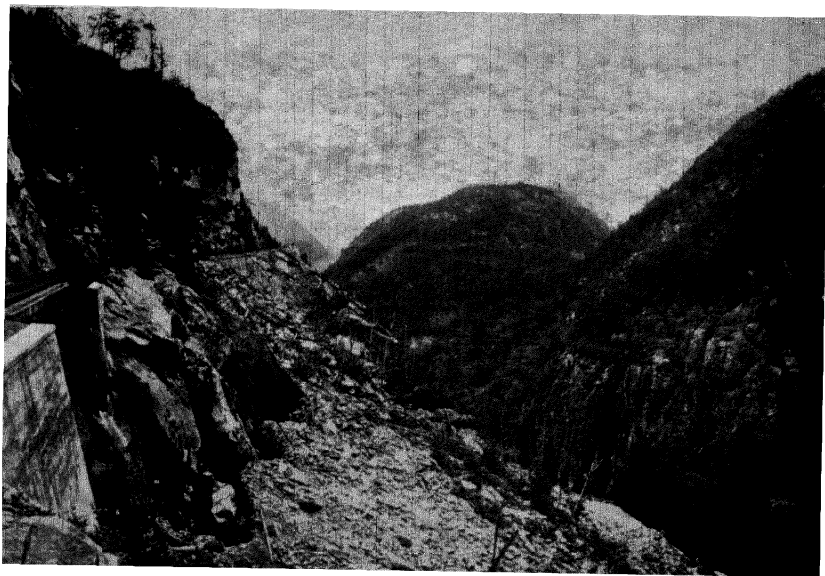
Stars and Stripes and the Canadian Jack, marked the international boundary line.

There was also a notice on the station wall ordering all *mushers* to report there. The word *musher*, meaning a person who walks, with or without dogs, across snow, is, so the Major told us, derived from the command, "Mush on!" which travellers address to their dogs when they want them to start, and "mush on" itself is a corruption of the French word *marchons*, used by the French-Canadian voyageurs.

Soon after passing the summit the train skirted the shores of Lake Bennett on the left, a long, narrow sheet of icy water surrounded by rugged snow-covered hills. It was once part of the highway to the Klondike, and in the days of the rush as many as four hundred hastily improvised rafts floated on its surface at one time, the gold-seekers hauling on rudimentary sweeps or urging their craft forward with blankets for sails rigged upon masts made of lopped saplings.

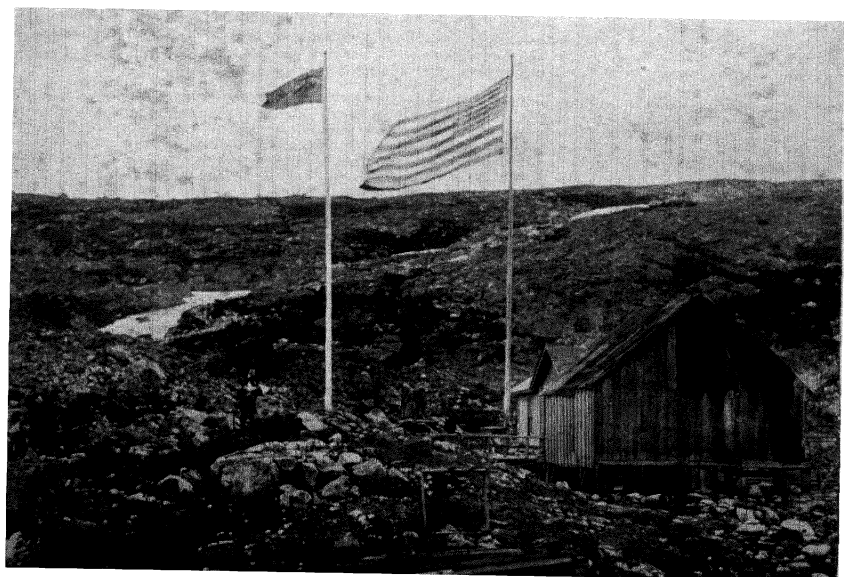
At a place named Pennington, we passed from the narrow strip of British Columbia into the Yukon, which belongs to Canada, and here we saw again the smart red-coated troopers of the Major's beloved Police. Further on still we came to Carcross, a name not half so "racy of the soil" as its original one of Caribou Crossing. The change was made, said the Major, because of muddles with the mail due to the existence in British Columbia of a district named Cariboo.

Lewes and other little lakes were passed, and then we came to Miles Canyon and White Horse Rapids. On still days the roar of these rapids can be heard in the town of White Horse, which is about an hour's walk away. We left the train here in the company of the Major, and walked to the brink of the famous gorge. With our companion's graphic memories to help us, it needed no difficult stretch of the imagination to picture the wild scenes of terror and despair and death that were enacted here only thirty-four years ago. The narrow river-bed, strewn with boulders, twists and turns between its rocky walls in a



" . . . on the way up White Pass. . . ."

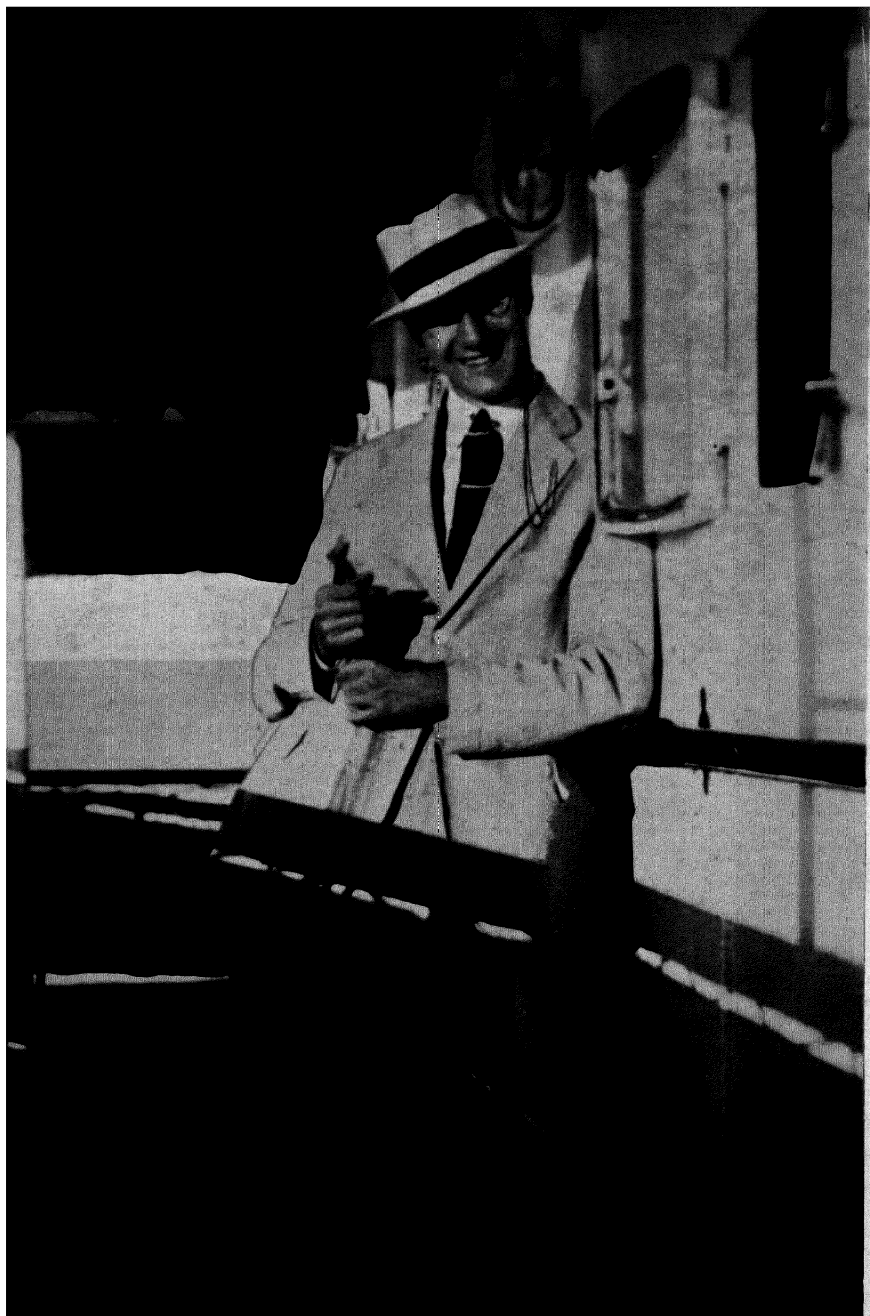
(see page 93)



ALASKA.

" . . . two tall slender flagstaffs marked the boundary."

(see page 93)



George.

series of serpentine bends, throwing the rushing waters from one side to the other and buffeting it so that its troubled current rides higher in the middle than at the sides. Along the river came the adventurers, and before they realized their peril their frail boats and rafts were seized by the racing flood and swept down the rapids. Some, becoming scared, leapt ashore, and, from the high cliffs, watched the destruction of their boats and all their belongings, but the majority, inured by now to perils and trusting to the miraculous luck which had carried them so far without disaster, stayed with their craft.

And so few of them came through unscathed.

Those that did wasted no time in going back to warn their competitors, but pressed forward to their goal. And behind them came still more, and so it went on. At no moment of the day or the night during the rush was that canyon empty of its tragedy or its desperate achievement.

White Horse, to which we walked along a good, though snow-covered, road, is a busy little town on the west bank of Fifty Mile River, also known as Lewes River and sometimes as the Upper Yukon. It is the terminus of the railway, and, as has been said, the point of departure of the steamers to Dawson City. It is also the highest point at which navigation is possible on the Upper Yukon River, which empties into the sea at St. Michael in Alaska, more than two thousand miles away.

George and I would have dearly liked to continue to the Klondike, but the trip takes about a week—two days from White Horse to Dawson City, but four days to come back, owing to the swift current. We therefore stayed the night at the hotel in White Horse, and in the morning bade farewell to the Major, whose friendly companionship we had so thoroughly enjoyed, and then took the train back again, down to Skagway, some eighty or ninety miles away.

On this return journey, however, the coaches were crowded with miners from Dawson and the Klondike district, who were getting out and going south before the iron grip of winter closed upon the land. The Arctic

Circle itself lies not a great distance north of Dawson City.

Of these southward bound miners more anon, however, for we were to have them as fellow passengers on the *Princess Mary*.

We called in at Mrs. Pullen's hotel to take leave of her and the Cressy-Marckx, and, after sundry farewell toasts, conjured from private sources of supply, Madame and the bridal pair insisted upon coming down to the boat and seeing us away in style. The long-suffering Ford was thereupon dragged from its lair, and forced, with sagging axles, to convey the five of us once more through the town and along the rumbling pier-like wharf to the steamer.

Here further toasts were drunk from bottles which were produced miraculously at a wave of her bejewelled hand, and what with this and that the ceremony developed into quite a jovial affair. We sailed at four-thirty p.m., and my final view of the Cressy-Marckx was of them standing one on each side of the massive, fur-swathed form of Madame Pullen like a couple of little children clinging to the skirts of the Mother of all Creation.

When we left them their expressed intention was to stop over for one steamer only, but, as a matter of fact, when George and I heard of them some months later, we learnt that they had spent nearly a month in Alaska, instead of a fortnight, and, during that period, had visited Dawson and *mushed* into the interior, and in this way and in others equally enterprising had thus pandered to the bride's craving for outlandish experiences.



CHAPTER TWELVE

BRITISH COLUMBIAN SALMON

THE return voyage to Vancouver held nothing new of very great interest, save that the boat was crowded with south-going miners. At Juneau, comparatively full though we were, we found the wharf congested with a further contingent of passengers, who, however, were somehow accommodated.

There was no mistaking the "calling" of these men—the bar-tender was on the run all the time—and until I had become accustomed to their attire, I felt as if I had strayed amongst the actors in a theatre. It was strange to see these huge men, clad in their Alaskan miner's garb, seated in the dining-saloon amidst spotless napery and shining glass, wielding the cutlery within their hamlike hands.

The more ordinary costume consisted of a khaki shirt wide open at the neck, worn beneath a mackinaw—a short, heavy, belted and double-breasted plaid coat, sporting a huge check—and dungaree trousers tucked inside enormously thick grey woollen socks which protruded from the tops of almost knee-high leather boots, laced in intricate fashion up the shin, the whole outfit being crowned and topped with a wide-brimmed felt hat. One man, tall and taciturn and with a face tanned to the colour of old mahogany, wore a complete suit of yellow-brown corduroy, with the coat belted tightly round the waist. The trousers of all of them seemed to have been cut from the same pattern—wide round the seat, thighs, and knees, but narrowing to a tight fit at the ankle.

But whatever kind of clothes they wore, they all chewed and all expectorated all the time. They were great hulking he-men, and they just jolly well did what they liked when they liked. If they felt like spitting, they spat, and a devastating belch was, as it is amongst the Arabs, an audible and gladsome sign of well-being.

Their table manners were fascinating, and in saying this I do not want the reader to run away with the idea that these comments of mine are made with any feeling of superiority or even disapproval in my mind. I was intensely interested, that is all. If it be the custom of the country to use one's fork at the table as a toothpick, so be it. It is their country, and no one invited me to visit it, anyhow.

Amongst these men—and amongst educated Americans too—the science of eating seems to consist in the discarding of almost all implements but the fork. Even in disposing of meat, the knife was only picked up for a moment in order to divide the tougher portions, and was then immediately laid down and the fork transferred once more to the right hand. But some held the knife in the left hand, grasping the blade half way down, whilst the fork was gripped in the right hand as one grips a dagger—with the tines protruding below the palm and the thumb in an upright position against the handle.

Vegetables were served in separate little white dishes, and it was not correct to transfer them to the meat-plate. Instead of this the encyclopædic fork darted from dish to dish like a diligent bee, transferring their contents direct to the mouth.

George and I made a few good friends amongst the men, and the days passed pleasantly enough until, on the evening of the fourth day after leaving Skagway, we arrived back in Vancouver once again. It was raining heavily, and I for one appreciated to the full the luxury, and especially the spaciousness, of my roomy bedroom at the Hotel Vancouver after the comfortable but necessarily cramped cabin quarters.

At breakfast next morning George and I reviewed our

plans. We still had ten days in hand before we were due to embark on the *Nippon Maru* at San Francisco, and, remembering our promise to Gilling, and his suggestions regarding salmon, we decided to walk round to his office. Gilling, cheery as ever, proved very helpful, and, making use of his professional connections, fixed up for us to see over a salmon-canning plant next day up the Fraser River.

It seems that there are five different kinds of so-called salmon in British Columbian waters: the sockeye, the spring, the coho, the pink, and the chum; and not one of them is the true salmon, as a Scotch salmon is true, at all. Early settlers in eastern North America found there the same fish they had known in Europe, and quite correctly they called them "salmon", for they are identical. On reaching the North Pacific coast, however, they found in the rivers a vast number of fish very similar in form and colour, and these they called "salmon" too, but quite wrongly, because they differ from true salmon both in structure and in habit. Thus, although these Pacific fish are now known and sold in tins all over the world as "salmon", they really belong to a finny family called the *Oncorhynchus*, but, as George remarked, it is too late to do anything about it now, because if he went into a shop and asked for a small tin of *Oncorhynchus* the scandalized grocer would probably have him thrown out.

Salmon canning is one of the principal industries of British Columbia. Along the 7,000 miles of her jagged coastline many rivers flow into the sea, and it is in or near the mouths of these that most of the big catches—or "packs" as they are called—are taken. For salmon are half sea-going and half river fish, and it is when they are making their way back to the rivers from the sea, in order to breed, that they are caught.

Every fourth year there is a tremendous abundance, that is to say, for three seasons there will be just an ordinary number of salmon, and then in the fourth year they come crowding up the rivers in millions and millions. The reason is that the life history of the salmon, from the

time the eggs are laid in the higher reaches of the river to the time when the fish, fully grown, return from the sea to that same river—is four years. Therefore the abundance of one year results in a corresponding abundance four years later.

For, extraordinary as it may seem, every salmon returns to spawn in the selfsame stretch of river in which it was born.

Young salmon, or “fry”, are born in clear shallow pools in the upper reaches of rivers and in lakes—sometimes hundreds of miles from the sea. As soon as they are strong enough to wriggle about they set out on their long journey to the ocean. The baby salmon have a very thin time of it, because they are chased about and snapped up by scores of bigger fish. Those that are lucky and manage to reach the sea find the mouth of every river alive with trout and chub lying in wait for them. Those that safely pass these many perils disappear from ken in the sea for a long time—two, three, or four years according to the type—and are not seen again until they are ready to return to their spawning grounds.

When they return they are full-grown, and towards the end of June they start on their return journey to the rivers, and the “run” begins.

I found it difficult to credit some of the stories I heard about these “runs”, or to believe that in bumper years sometimes there have been so many salmon struggling to get up a river at one time that their backs have stuck out of the water and made a carpet of wriggling fish stretching from shore to shore. One fellow told me that he had once watched a bear sitting on the banks of the Fraser River scooping out big fat salmon with its paw—“ping, ping, ping, just like that!”

In any event, towards the end of June and continuing until late autumn, hundreds of thousands of salmon, full-fed and glistening with health and vigour, besiege the mouths of rivers and forge their way up towards the spawning grounds, and it is then that the fishermen use every artifice they can think of to intercept and catch the

silver horde. Four principal methods are used: gill nets, purse nets, trolling lines, and traps. Gill nets are nets in which the mesh is of such size that the fish swimming into them are caught and held by the gills. The purse net or seine is used for surrounding schools of fish in the estuaries. When a school coming in on the flood tide is sighted by a fishing boat, one end of the net is put overboard and fastened to a stationary rowboat. Then the fishing-boat circles cautiously round the fish, paying out the net steadily until both ends of the net have been brought together again. The bottom of the net is then closed by means of ropes which draw all the lower edges together, and the whole affair hauled up to the surface like a huge bag, and the fish removed. The third method is trolling, and this is done by putting out lines with baited hooks from a rowboat or motor-boat, and trailing them through the water.

Finally, the traps. Traps are large and elaborate affairs of heavy piling and wire-netting built out from the shore, and are only allowed on the coast and on the Straits between Vancouver Island and the mainland, not inside the rivers themselves. The fish, following the line of least resistance, swim along the netting into a big heart-shaped enclosure, from which a small opening leads into the "pot". Once in the pot the salmon are trapped. The quivering mass of fish—there may be 100,000 in a single trap—is then hoisted by nets into a boat and taken to the cannery.

Apart from the nets and the fish-traps, thousands of seals are on the look-out, too, for the running salmon. Seals are terribly destructive and very extravagant feeders; they just bite the best piece from the middle of the salmon, and let the remainder sink to the bottom. And as if all these perils were not enough, the mouths of the rivers and the rivers themselves are alive with scores of motor-boats prowling about, manned by white men, Japanese, and Indians, each boat with baited lines or a trawl net.

It is really a living wonder that any of the salmon manage to dodge all these enemies and succeed in

swimming up the rivers to lay their eggs. Indeed, comparatively few would succeed were it not for the wise Canadian law which prohibits all fishing whatsoever for a period of forty-eight hours in every week. Even those that do survive still have natural perils to surmount. Swift rapids frequently bar their way, and sometimes they have to leap fifteen feet into the air in order to climb up a waterfall. But finally the survivors come to a shallow gravelly reach or to a lake in the mountains where they can lay their eggs. Spawning takes place between August and November. When the eggs are fertilized the mother heaps gravel over them for protection—the river-beds are quite covered with these little egg-mounds, known as “redds”—and then, their life-work completed, both parent salmon die. When the spring sun warms the river-beds the eggs hatch out, the water becomes alive with small fry—and so the marvellous cycle starts all over again.

The Fraser River used to be the most famous of all British Columbian salmon rivers, but our friend at the cannery told us sadly that its glory has departed. It was famous not only for the almost incredible number of salmon that jostled and crowded up its stream, but also because these salmon were the prized “sockeye”—fish of six and a half to seven pounds in weight, possessing that deep red-coloured flesh which the public at large consider to be the best simply because its colour most closely resembles that of true salmon.

When commercial salmon-fishing began in 1876, only this variety was caught, and the Fraser River quickly became the most famous sockeye fishery in the world. The numbers of fish were so great that the fishermen simply refused to believe—in spite of warnings from the more far-sighted—that the supply could or would ever dwindle. A peak was reached in 1913, when over 25,000,000 individual sockeye salmon were taken. In the same year there was a great disaster. A big rockslide at Hell's Gate Canyon, some way upstream, blocked the river and prevented the fish from reaching their spawning-grounds. This blow, coming on top of continuous over-fishing,

diminished the numbers of sockeye to such an extent that the Fraser River lost its supremacy, and other rivers—such as the Skeena and the Nass further to the north—became more important. Now sockeyes are artificially bred in hatcheries maintained by the Canadian Government, and every year the rivers are restocked with fish.

Although the “run” commences usually at about the end of June, it sometimes continues until October, and when George and I visited the canning factory some fish were still coming up the river. Indeed, whilst we were there several motor-boats, manned by Indians, came to land their catches at the wharf. The Indians and Japanese who come to the rivers to gather the harvest of salmon are a very mixed lot. Some of them live in small ranches on the banks of the rivers, and, between fishing seasons, spend their time farming.

The Indians begin to turn up in June. They come sliding down the rivers in their long black canoes all piled up with men, women, children, dogs, fowls, and tents. They beach their canoes at a suitable place, the tents rise like magic, beds and bedding are fixed, fires are lit, and in no time at all there is a whole encampment of them. Fires burn, dogs bark, hens cackle, children shout, and the whole thing looks as if it had been there and meant to stay there for years. And often, when night-time comes, our cannery friend told us, the men of the tribe dance round the smoky fire, all in single file, bowing and prancing and howling wild songs, whilst the women and children squat around banging as hard as they can on kettles and tin pans.

But when the salmon come rushing up from the sea it is all very different. The fishermen jump into their motor-boats, which are laid up during the off-season, and set to work. There are usually two men in each boat, one to run it and the other to look after the net. It is no easy matter handling the net, because it is often about 300 yards long, and not only must it be hauled in, but the salmon have to be killed one by one by hitting them hard on the head with a stick.

Night and day the salmon pour up the river in an

endless stream, and the fishermen are, save for the forty-eight hours' grace period, hauling and setting their nets all the time. It sometimes happens that these men remain for four or five days at a time in their little vessels, snatching sleep as best they can, and cooking their hasty meals on a tiny oil-stove. All through the night lanterns twinkle on the river, laying little serpents of golden light on its restless surface. When daylight comes the boats draw in to the landing-stages and unload their cargoes of great fish, which shine in the morning sun like bars of polished silver.

The cannery we visited was situated in a little offshoot of the main river, at the foot of hills covered from base to summit with trees whose foliage burned in gorgeous colours under October's magic touch. The cannery itself was a collection of white-painted sheds built out over the water on piles, with a series of landing-stages. Everything within was spotlessly clean, and nearly all the work was done by machinery.

When the catches reached the cannery they were sorted out according to their varieties, and each heap slid down a chute into the "Iron Chink"—so called because it replaced the Chinese labourers who used to gut the fish. Into the mouth of the "Iron Chink" went beautiful, gleaming salmon at the rate of sixty fish a minute, and they came out again at the other end at the same rate with their heads, tails, fins and insides gone, and what was left washed clean by jets of water.

They were then shot along a carrier into tubs of salt water, where they were scrubbed inside and out by Indian women, and then passed to another big machine where circular knives cut them into slices, each of exactly the right size to fill one tin. These slices were popped into the tins, which were carried on a travelling belt to a clever apparatus that put lids on at the rate of one hundred and fifty a minute. Another machine welded them on, and still another soldered them down. The tins have to be absolutely airtight, of course, and in order to test them for this they were sunk in nearly boiling water.

Whilst we were watching a batch went in, and from one of them arose a number of bubbles. Out it came and went back to be re-soldered. The others—the perfect ones—were taken out and put inside a steam-box, where they were heated to more than boiling point for about half an hour. Then a tiny hole was made in the lid of each one to allow the steam inside to escape; the hole was quickly closed again with a drop of solder, which made a little lump, and once more the cans were heated to a high temperature for about an hour this time. All this heating served a double purpose we were told. Not only did it cook the salmon and soften the bones, but it also destroyed any germs which might later on turn the fish rotten. When the cooking was finished the cans were varnished and labelled and neatly packed in cases containing forty-eight one-pound tins.

Every year between a million and a half and two million such cases leave the canneries which fringe British Columbia's coastline—and as George and I motored back to Vancouver that afternoon, he said to me that he hoped to goodness he would never see a tin of salmon again as long as he lived.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SALMON-FISHING ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

IN view of the vehement way in which George, the night before, had practically washed his hands of salmon for ever, it was perhaps rather surprising to find, when morning came, that he was just as keen as ever to carry out the arrangement we had made with Gilling to go salmon-fishing with him on Vancouver Island. Though, after all, perhaps not so very surprising, for any follower of Izaak Walton knows that a tiddler on the line is worth two salmon in a tin. After checking our cabin-trunks right through to San Francisco, we met Gilling down at the pier and caught the 10.30 boat—another floating royalty by the name of *Princess Charlotte*—from Vancouver City to Victoria on Vancouver Island. The duplication of names was confusing at first, but a glance at the map soon cleared up the difficulty.

Victoria is the capital of British Columbia, is situated at the southern extremity of Vancouver Island, and the distance between Victoria and Vancouver City is eighty-three miles—which the steamer did in four and a half hours, threading its swift course between wooded islets and beneath the island's heavily-wooded shores. At three p.m. we glided into the busy harbour.

Kipling wrote of this city :

To realize Victoria you must take all that the eye admires most in Bournemouth, Torquay, the Isle of Wight, the Happy Valley at Hong Kong, the Doon, Sorrento, and Camps Bay ; add reminiscences of the Thousand Islands, and arrange the whole around the Bay of Naples, with some Himalayas for the background.

. . . and in Victoria and parts adjacent, that simple paragraph is looked upon as being undoubtedly the finest thing that Kipling ever wrote.

We had time only to glimpse from the pier the really magnificent piles of the Parliament Buildings and the Canadian Pacific Empress Hotel, before Gilling hustled us into a taxi, whisked us to the Railroad Depot ("Deepo") of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Company Limited



VANCOUVER ISLAND

("Esk-my-malt and Nan-eye-mo"), and hustled us into a waiting train which thereupon steamed away with us instanter.

Our objective was Cowichan Bay, a narrow inlet of the sea on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island.

The line commenced to climb almost immediately after leaving Victoria, and soon was running high up on a mountainside upon a track cut out like a shelf. On

our left the mountain towered upwards, and on the right fell sheer away to the blue waters of a narrow arm of the sea, bounded on the opposite shore by another mountain covered from base to summit with the dark-green of firs splashed with brilliant gold and russet and pale-green—the autumn tints of the maple and the arbutus.

The train twisted like a serpent round jutting shoulders and escarpments, until George remarked that at the next curve he was going to try and shake hands out of our carriage window with the engine-driver.

At half-past five we reached Cowichan Station and found Mr. Day, our landlord, awaiting us with a car. A short drive through the woods brought us to the brink of a steep hill, and Cowichan Bay lay below us.

Imagine that you are looking down into a long, narrow bay—it is roughly seven miles long and only one and a half miles wide—hemmed in by high hills timbered from shore to skyline. Imagine, too, that the waters of this bay are of the deepest turquoise blue, contrasting in a marvellous way with the splashes of vivid autumnal colour on the hillsides. So far not too difficult, perhaps. But imagine, now, if you can, salmon—salmon leaping from the blue waters of Cowichan Bay in such numbers that it was as if a giant were hurling into it continuously great handfuls of stones. And dotted about amongst the leaping salmon were little row-boats, many of them with their eager occupants reeling in furiously. Can you wonder that all three of us emitted sharp yelps of joy and excitement, and, hardly noticing the hotel and the suitcases which we hastily dumped therein, rushed down to the jetty, negotiated impatiently for a boat and tackle, and sculled out hurriedly, like an agitated water-beetle, upon the surface of the bay.

It was nearly six o'clock, and too late for fishing, but what of it? How could any man worthy of the name have possessed his soul in patience until the morning when confronted with such a leaping, flashing answer to *The Fisherman's Prayer*?

Gilling put out two lines and slowly sculled along,

whilst George and I, seated side by side in the narrow sternsheets, gazed in amazement at the scene around us. On all sides of us great fish were leaping—some shooting straight up from the surface like silver rods, others in a graceful curving leap, their glorious bodies bent tense like a bow, whilst yet others just showed their green backs like a hummock above the surface, and rolled over, dolphin-like. I saw big salmon spring out of the bay, crash back, leap again and yet again. Once I counted six leaps, in quick succession, of the same fish.

Amazing and entrancing sight! The rays of the sinking sun, slanting between two hills, made a shining spear of every leaping fish and transformed each splashing re-entry into a glittering fountain of diamonds.

The sun sank below the rim of the western hills, shadows swept across the bay and swiftly climbed the encircling woods, quenching their vivid tints and deepening them to purple, whilst above us, burning like a tiny lamp in the darkling sky, hung one remote star.

Gilling said: "Well, chaps, what about a spot of food? "It's too dark to do any more fishing to-night."

I took a deep breath and came back to mundane things. The fish were still leaping, and Gilling said that they did it to rid themselves of parasites. This was a further blow, for I should have much preferred to think that they leapt from sheer *joie de vivre*.

The Buena Vista was a good-looking, timber-built hotel built on the slope of the hill, with a spacious verandah, and its gabled upper storeys painted white. The polished floor of its roomy lounge was covered with skin rugs, a number of deep, leather-covered armchairs were grouped about a central wood-burning stove, and the walls were hung with antlered heads and other trophies of sea and forest. Fishing tackle and guns filled every available corner. Everything was very simple, very plain, and rather bare, and the whole effect was that of a man's hotel—delightfully untidy, comfortable, and well-worn.

An excellent meal, served by a slow-moving Chinaman,

combined with the keen air of the lake and the post-prandial warmth of the stove, made us very sleepy, and we all piled off to bed at ten o'clock to prepare for a field-day on the morrow.

Half-past seven o'clock on a fine October morning ; a cloudless sky overhead ; the air clean, keen and bracing ; and the bright sun shining down on the twinkling blue waters of the bay. George, in spite of our protests, sang at the top of his voice as Gilling rowed us out into the middle of the inlet. The salmon were still leaping joyously. Joyously, I say, not parasitically—for I had decided to repudiate the parasite motif—and behold ! all things were good.

In Cowichan Bay the only two species of salmon that matter are the springs and the cohoes. The spring only bites in the very early morning, or a couple of hours before sunset. He also feeds low down in the water, and therefore a heavy weight must be used to sink the spoon sufficiently deep for him, 2 lbs. being the average weight used. The spring is also a much larger fish than the coho, and quite a usual weight is 25 lbs. A week before we arrived a visitor had landed one of 57 lbs. Finally, a spring salmon has a Grecian nose and the back of him is coloured a lightish green.

The coho, on the other hand, possesses a dark green back and a Roman nose ; is smaller, averaging about 10 to 15 lbs., feeds near the surface, and bites only at small bait, so that to catch him a light lead and a small spoon must be used. Moreover, a coho, unlike a spring, bites at any time during the day. Finally, the coho is the gamer fish.

There being three of us in the boat, Gilling, with the self-denial common to members of his profession, said that he would row whilst George and I fished with rods. These rods were short and stout, carrying a large reel, 150 feet of strong but light line, and a two-ounce lead weight fastened on about twenty feet above a Stewart spoon, which swam through the water with a weaving and not with a spinning motion.

Within fifteen minutes I felt a tug on my line and the rod bent over like a whip-lash—but alas!—on reeling in on a suspiciously slack line, I found that it had snapped off at its junction with the lead weight, so that I had lost both spoon and fish. We soon fixed another, however, and started off again. Gilling also took the opportunity to rig up a rod for himself, with the top sticking out from the side of the boat and the butt wedged under the thwart.

The little boat had hardly commenced to move again when Gilling's rod whipped into a curving bow and would have gone overboard if he had not dropped both oars and grabbed it—the rowlocks being so devised that it was possible to drop the oars without losing them.

The fish took the line with a rush and the reel screamed as it spun; it slowed, and Gilling reeled in, only to let out again as the fish made another rush. Gradually, fighting like a warrior every foot of the way, the salmon was drawn slowly towards the boat until its dark back and beautiful silver sides were visible in the clear water. Another minute and a steady, clever lift pulled it right into the boat, where it lay arching and flapping until a few hard blows from a wooden truncheon laid it lifeless. A coho salmon of about 12 lbs.

George got the next bite. He was sitting hunched up on the seat, loosely holding his rod and gazing dreamily at the lovely fish lying motionless on the floor-boards, when, without the slightest warning, a salmon took his bait, jerked hard at his rod, and before he could tighten his grip the fish, with the rod skittering along the top of the water behind it, was travelling at the rate of knots towards Alaska and the Frozen North. I shall never forget the expression of blank astonishment with which George looked down uncomprehendingly at his empty hands, and then followed with his eyes the antics of his buck-jumping fishing-rod.

A little later I got another tug at my line, but, being a novice, I allowed the fish to break water in a tremendous leap and, the line being slack, he shook out the hook and got away. The next bite, however, I managed to handle

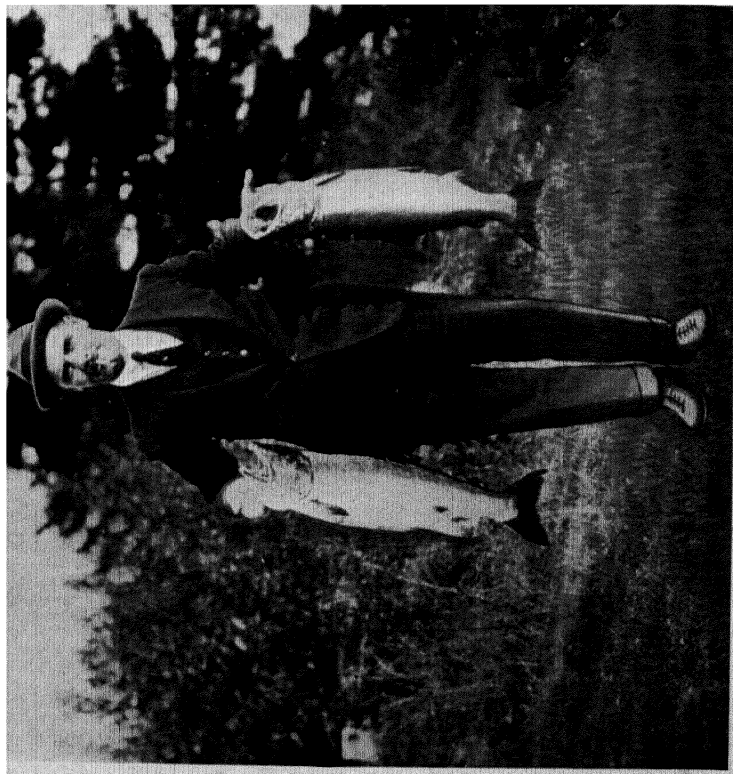
better. The reel screeched as the line ran out, and, in trying to steady it, I had the skin taken off the ball of my thumb with the speed and the friction. Then began a battle which lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, reeling in, easing out, reeling in again, now fast, now slow, keeping the line taut and tiring the rushing fish. Gradually I drew the salmon towards the boat until it was so close that the thin line ran down vertically into the water like a stretched piano wire, and sheered through it with a tiny hiss as the fish weaved to and fro. Suddenly giving up the fight, it lay over on its gleaming silver side, and Gilling, with a deft stroke of the gaff between the dorsal fin and the tail, lifted the shining beauty into the boat. A coho, weighing $15\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.

By one o'clock we had landed only three salmon, and George, yawning cavernously, raised the question of lunch. On Gilling pointing out that no Indians were fishing, showing that the proper state of the tide had not yet arrived, we decided to row in, have lunch, and resume in the afternoon.

In less than an hour we were again on the bay, but up till three o'clock caught nothing at all, although the salmon were so numerous and were leaping so vigorously all round us that several times the splash of them sprinkled us, and once a fish actually rose underneath and bumped the bottom of the boat. Half an hour later, however, the Indians began to launch their dugout canoes, and, as Gilling had predicted, sport immediately improved.

Perhaps because I happened to be using our only Colorado Spinner I got nearly all the fun, for by half-past five I had hooked, played, and safely landed no fewer than four fish, one of them a monster of $19\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. by the hotel scales.

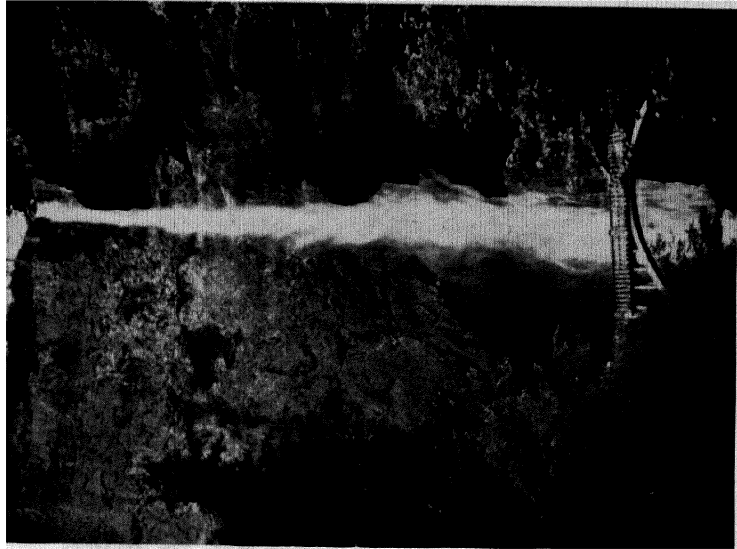
In the late afternoon we saw, and tried for, spring salmon—enormous fellows of 30 to 50 lbs. weight—that showed their fat green backs for a moment as they rolled over like great porpoises. But July is the best time for these monsters, and we had no luck, although we used a Glen Stewart No. 6—brass on one side and silver on the



VANCOUVER ISLAND.

" . . . I got nearly all the fun."

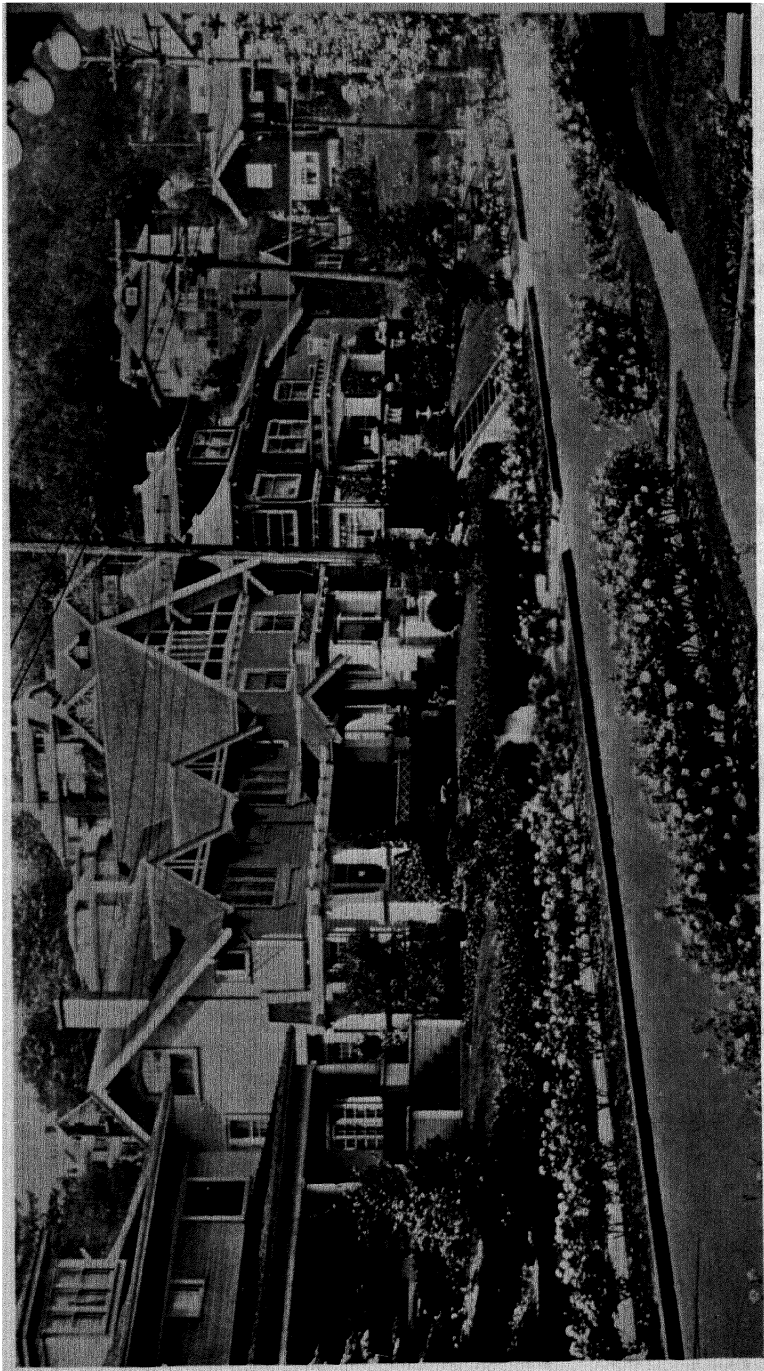
(see page 112)



OREGON

" . . . streams which came cascading down . . ."

(see page 119)



PORTLAND, OREGON.

" . . . passing through the residential district with its most attractive houses . . . "

other—on a line an eighth of an inch thick weighted so that it almost dredged along the sea floor.

As the sun began to sink behind the hills it painted the eastern peaks a rosy red and the evening clouds a vivid orange. Down below on the surface of the bay the level rays threw into amazing relief the salmon as they shot up like gleaming steel bars, flashing and glittering against the sombre background of the water. But with the sunset came a bitterly cold wind, and we were glad to reach the warm and friendly hotel with our precious and weighty catch—ten fine salmon of a total weight of 94½ lbs.

Then arose the age-old query: "What to do with the body!" Gilling said he would take two back with him on the morrow, for himself and friends, but even so that left eight. George and I could find no use for any of them, of course, and the landlord, on being approached, thanked us patiently, but said that he had enough salmon in the larder to keep the whole hotel for a week.

Eight salmon! Who wanted eight salmon? Nobody! Who, then, would be so very kind as to take eight salmon away from us? Nobody! The thing was getting serious! At the moment the fish were lying in a row on the grass bank beside the hotel, but on enquiry, Joe, the handyman, informed us coldly that we must not leave them there. To leave salmon lying about on Vancouver Island was against the law, or something.

The position was becoming desperate. Darkness had fallen, a cold wind was blowing, and all three of us were longing to get into the hotel and have a bath and a good dinner, and here we were standing in the gloomy night beside the stark and faintly phosphorescent corpses of eight unpresentable salmon. George tried to leave us with the baby, of course. "Ah, well," he said, "I think I'll just be getting along; have a bath, you know; frightfully dirty and all that!"

"Oh no, you won't, me lad!" I exclaimed, grabbing him by the coat-sleeve. "Not until we've got rid of these fish, you won't!"

It was Gilling who solved the problem. I saw him muttering to Joe, something passed from one hand to the other, and a moment later Gilling called out: "Come on, boys, Joe is going to deal with the salmon."

Later, over dinner, I asked him what Joe was going to do with the fish—eat them?

"Eat them?" laughed Gilling. "Rather not. Joe loathes salmon."

"What then?" I asked.

"Manure! Use them for fish-manure on his cabbage-patch!" replied Gilling.

Sitting smoking comfortably round the glowing stove after a most excellent dinner, we fell into a chat with an American named Bender, who was staying a few days for the pheasant-shooting. A most interesting man, whose life was apparently dedicated to the slaughter of those fish and birds and animals which, by reason of their size or their delightful habit of fighting exceptionally hard to avoid death—in sporting parlance "gameness"—gave him the most excitement to kill.

He was a sportsman to the finger-tips, and had shot and fished practically all over the world.

He told us some wonderful tales of the fishing off the coast of Mexico; of battles with saw-fish, sword-fish, tunny, devil-fish, sun-fish, the giant ray and sharks—monsters that ran up to 400 lbs. in weight. He told us, too, of an ingenious bait that he had invented. It appears that many of the big fellows are partial to flying-fish, but when he baited his hook with a dead one he was never very successful. As he put it in his dry drawl, a dead flying-fish dragged through the sea on a bit of line "looks pretty mean!" So he thought out a scheme whereby, with the assistance of a carefully adjusted Japanese kite attached by thin wire to the bait, the flying-fish was made to skim and skip over the surface of the water in a most lifelike manner. This proved quite irresistible, and was entirely successful from his point of view.

Another of his tales was about a certain fish of which there are three species, each of a different size and all of

cannibalistic tendencies. Bender said it often happened that a fisherman would get one of the smallest size of the three on his hook, only to find, on reeling in, that one of the larger ones had swallowed it. In fact, he said, once he had hooked a small one, which, as he was reeling in, was swallowed by the next size larger, which, in turn, before he could land it, was "bolted by the largest size of all" !

There was a short silence.

"Well," murmured George at last, "I'm pretty good at swallowing, myself, but . . ."

"Ah !" said Bender, with a smile, "I thought you might perhaps be doubtful of that one, so just a minute."

He slipped upstairs to his room and shortly returned with an album of snapshots open at one showing an enormous fish, like a tarpon in shape, lying on a grassy bank, with its mouth wide open. Protruding from its jaws was the head of a similar, but smaller, fish, and this again revealed in its gaping mouth the head of a third fish. From the jaws of the third and smallest fish, a fishing-line led to the tip of a rod held upright by the smiling figure of Mr. Bender himself.

The three of us rose and bowed.

Bender, continuing, told us that sword-fish act in an extraordinary manner when one of their number is hooked. They all gather round, dashing wildly to and fro, and actually butt against the boat in their efforts to assist their friend. Sometimes the swordlike projection they carry pierces the boat and breaks off. . . . I was reminded of the Indian trick—the small boy in the basket lanced and pierced by gleaming sword-blades, and in imagination I saw Bender dodging with agility from side to side within the boat as the lances of the enraged sword-fish came stabbing through from every direction. If I had not been so very sleepy I would have asked him whether the swords just broke off and the fish swam away bereft of their weapons, or whether his boat was finally surrounded by despondent sword-fish with their noses immovably embedded in the planking.

Next morning we returned to Victoria by the serpentine train, and lunched at the Empress, one of the finest hotels in Canada. Its outlook over smooth green lawns and a wide promenade to the bustling harbour is exceptionally fine. The thing that struck George and me most about Victoria was its "English" appearance. It is pre-eminently a city of homes, and the trim, well-kept lawns and gardens, the winding green lanes of the suburbs, and the profusion of oak trees and broom make it a "bit of England on the Pacific", as someone has said. It is Canada's ocean gateway to the West—to Australia, Japan, and New Zealand—and, incidentally, Victoria was the only port, I believe, in which H.M.S. *Hood* and H.M.S. *Repulse* were able to berth at the same time during their round-the-world voyage in 1924.

Victoria lies practically on the same degree of latitude as Paris, but it has a milder climate, owing to the warm Japanese current. In fact, its climate, like its appearance, is very like that of England, and many people from the Far East, from China, India, and also from England itself, seem to have come there to live and brought their money with them—perhaps one reason being that Victoria has no municipal income nor personal property tax!

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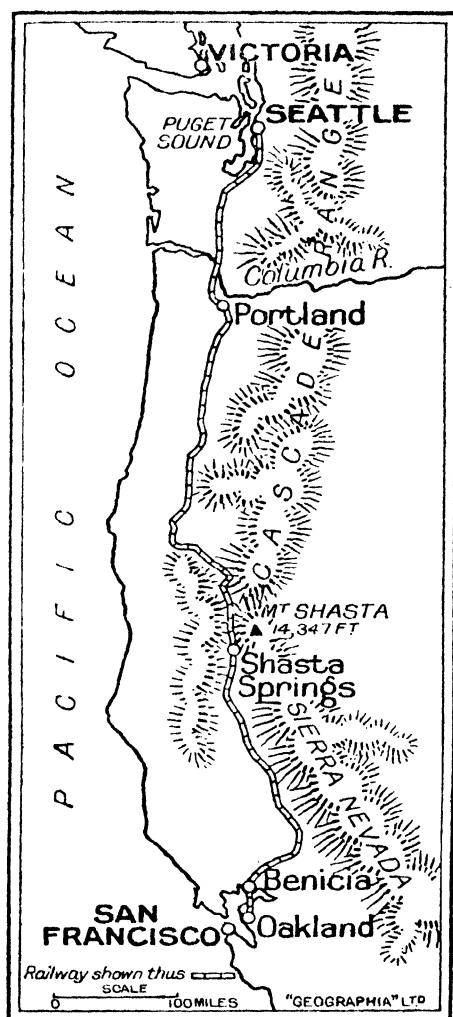
George and I said good-bye to friend Gilling and caught the 4.30 boat to Seattle, where we arrived, after an entirely uneventful trip, at eight p.m. We proceeded to the station and took up our standard sleepers—previously wired for from Victoria—and then, as the train was not due to leave until 11.15, we went for a stroll into the town. But we must have taken the wrong turning somewhere, because we found ourselves wandering up some ill-lighted streets in the Japanese quarter, where groups of toughs of sinister aspect eyed us malevolently from beneath lowered cap-peaks. It was all due to George's eye-glass, of course—a silly thing to wear at any time, but absolutely fatuous in surroundings like those. As a set-off, however, perhaps one ought to mention that George, when he

likes, can stand 6 ft. 3 in. in his socks. Anyhow, we got back to the station and the train all right, without any trouble.

Seattle, of course, is in the United States, chief city of King County in the State of Washington, and a busy seaport.

It was bitterly cold during the night, and I slept badly, although I used both George's overcoat and my own as extra covering. We reached Portland, Oregon, very early next morning, but they shunted the sleeper into a siding and allowed us to stay in it until eight o'clock. George complained so much of the cold, however, that we decided to get up, and, leaving our bags at the station, we walked through the crisp, frosty air to the Multnomah Hotel, where George caused a sensation in the dining-room by the amount of breakfast he ate.

The coon waiter, who probably received a commission on bookings, persuaded us to agree to stay over for twelve hours in order to take a five-dollar



SEATTLE TO SAN FRANCISCO

motor trip along the Columbia River. He said it was well worth the money—which he forthwith collected—and I believe it was, if only for the fun I got out of it.

At 9.30 a most palatial seven-seater six-cylinder car came to the door, and we found that two other passengers, a mother and her daughter, were going too. They, of course, sat in the back seats, and George and I took the two pull-out seats facing them. The mother—a Mrs. Ballot, as she took pains to inform us immediately, “and this is my datur Sadie”—the mother was a rather voluminous person with a tongue that never ceased wagging and was, anyway, much too large for her mouth. It was always overflowing through her teeth, causing her to lithp thlightly.

From the very moment the car started she made a dead set at George, on behalf of her “datur” Sadie. It was his eye-glass again, of course, which she undoubtedly took as an outward and visible sign of noble, and possibly royal, birth. Before we were clear of the suburbs she had already given George a short *précis* of her house, its situation, size, and furnishing scheme. She then proceeded to deal in masterly fashion with Poppa’s financial position and prospects, describing in detail her social life and activities—sprinkling several “Judges” and “Colonels” about—and having thus thoroughly prepared the ground, as it were, launched into her main subject, the thtory of Thadie’s life. Never was such a daughter! University graduate, member of every High-Brow and Intellectual Up-Lift Society in Town, contributor of “papers” to the Literary and Poetry Study Classes, “but not a bit of a Blue-Thtocking!” Mrs. Ballot assured George; “jutht a dear, thimple little girlie, don’t y’know”.

Meanwhile the “thimple little girlie” ignored her mother altogether, and, in the intervals of patting her hair into position, powdering her nose and gazing admiringly at her extended and highly manicured finger-nails, took a look now and then at the passing scenery—which was well worth looking at.

After passing through a residential district with most

attractive houses, the road climbed steadily upwards through woods, with the snow-capped cone of Mount St. Helens in the distance, to the top of a high bluff, giving a fine view of the Columbia River far below, winding its way through the valley with the Cascade Mountains for a background. The surface of the tar-macadam highway was perfect, and it struck me that our own County authorities might take a hint from the Portland City Council, who, when giving out road-making contracts, I was told, stipulate that the road must be kept in good repair, free of charge, for ten years after completion. Naturally the contractor puts in his best work.

("And now, Mithter George, won't you tell me thomething about yourthelf? You live in London?")

"No!" said George.)

From the top of the bluff the road wound along, falling gradually in a well-engineered grade, curving round the face of the cliffs on a track cut out like a shelf, through rock-tunnels and over bridges spanning brawling streams which came cascading down from the cliff-top three hundred feet above us.

("There's a Lord George, of courthe—you aren't a relation, by any chanthe, are you, Mr. George?")

"No!" said George.)

Soon after twelve we came to a large building that advertised itself as a Government Salmon Hatchery, and, as a hurried question from George addressed to the driver elicited the fact that it could be inspected by the public, he told him to pull up. The car stopped, and George stepped out, hustling me along with him. Closing the door firmly, and raising his hat politely, George said: "Well, good morning, Mrs. Ballot; so glad to have met you!" and, turning to the chauffeur, he added: "Don't wait, thanks; we shall be stopping here for three weeks." With that he bowed again, smiled charmingly, and, grabbing my arm, turned and walked me up the steps of the salmon hatchery.

The car moved away.

The hatchery was a large building filled from end to

end with trays of running water—fresh water, for although the Pacific salmon spends four-fifths of its life in the sea, it spawns in the fresh water of rivers or lakes, and its eggs die when immersed in brine.

There were millions of baby salmon in that building, in all stages of growth. First the little round egg, like a trayful of pink pearls; then the same with the tiny eyes of the enclosed fish showing like a dark spot inside; then the transparent body of the little salmon with the now elongated and darkened egg attached underneath it; and so on through remaining stages of growth, during which the baby fish increased in size whilst at the same time the egg attachment below became smaller and smaller, until finally the fry became a tiny replica of the full-sized salmon, with silver scales complete. When they reached this stage of development they were removed to the big tanks outside, whence they were shipped, in containers like milk-cans, to the rivers. Here they become acclimatized, and, urged by instinct, ultimately make their way to the sea.

I have previously mentioned the curious fact that salmon, at the end of their life-cycle, always return to the same river in which they were born, in order to lay their eggs. As I looked at the tiny salmon in the Columbia River Hatchery, I wondered whether this homing instinct operated in the same way with these foundlings—being born within them at the moment they were tipped into the river selected for them.

George and I spent quite an hour in the hatchery, and, after feeding with bread some voracious and vividly coloured rainbow-trout swirling about in a pond in the grounds, we partook of a salmon lunch at a nearby restaurant, engaged a local car by telephone, and continued our run in peace to Cascade Locks, a series of three large locks on the Columbia River which enable small river steamers to continue their voyage up the stream as far as Les Dalles.

At the moment of our arrival an old-fashioned stern-wheel steamer was just going through, an event which would have been interesting to watch had not George

caught sight—sticking up over the back of a stationary car—of a plumed bonnet which he swore was Mrs. Ballot's.

So we left hurriedly, reached Portland again without incident, dined at an inconspicuous restaurant, and caught the eight p.m. Southern Pacific train for San Francisco.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HONOLULU

THE First Kiss! The First Love-letter! The First Palm Tree!—wild palm tree, I mean.

We had left Portland at eight p.m. on the Saturday night, and on Monday morning when I lifted the blind of my sleeper . . . It was a clear, hot morning, and the train was rolling along through a landscape of undulating hills bare of foliage and apparently composed of sand. Suddenly we ran through a small station, and there—Could it be? Yes, they were!—*palm trees*, tall, graceful date palms, with their leaves swaying and rustling in the breeze. I placed the soles of my feet against the sagging bulge in the mattress overhead that advertised George's most salient feature, and I gave one mighty shove.

"Don't do it," said George. "What is it? What do you want?"

"Palms, George," I cried; "wild palm trees growing in the ground!"

"Well, by Gosh," replied George querulously; "what did you expect to see in California—*aspidistras*?"

"Sorry!" I murmured, somewhat dashed; "but they looked kind of queer; kind of theatrical, if you know what I mean."

Theatrical *is* the word, I think, that describes the effect produced by one's first sight of palm trees growing wild. And it causes a nice, warm, thrilly sensation inside, or it did with me.

During the thirty-six hours that had elapsed since

leaving Portland we had been pounding steadily south—at first between the Cascade Mountains and the sea-coast, and then, after crossing the border into California, cutting inland through and over the range beneath Mount Shasta, a 14,000-foot mountain, covered with snow. At the summit of the climb the train had halted at Shasta Springs, and we drank—because the others did—from a spring beside the track, an unexciting kind of natural soda-water. Altogether a pleasant but uneventful journey, lightened somewhat by George's efforts to carry on an intelligent conversation with two girls who were on their way to Hollywood to try their luck in the film world.

But now our long journey was drawing to an end, and at 8.30 we reached Benicia. Benicia lies on the northern side of the upper arm of a large estuary of the sea shaped rather like a prone letter \prec , San Francisco being situated on the southern bank of the lower arm. At Benicia our train was split into two portions, which were placed side by side on a train ferry and taken across the estuary to the opposite bank, where they were again linked up and hauled to Oakland, which faces San Francisco across the waters of the lower arm of the capital Y. Here we all alighted and took the ferry over to the city, lying beneath a morning haze beyond the dancing waters of the bay.

We decided to stay at the Hotel St. Francis, a fine-looking building standing high on the hill, and obtained a room each at six dollars a night, with palatial bathroom attached. All meals, according to American plan, were extra and paid for at the table.

After getting settled in we went down into the town to the offices of the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Steamship Line to see about our tickets. These were all in order, but before issuing them they asked us to go to the Inland Revenue office in Sansome Street for the necessary official papers which would permit us to leave God's country. These, we found, consisted of a statement, which we had to sign, that we had duly discharged all our U.S.A. Inland Revenue dues, if any. After scanning them through rather anxiously and finding to our relief that no mention

was made of British Income Tax liabilities, both George and I signed them boldly and with an extraordinary feeling of conscious rectitude. Our heavy baggage had arrived from Vancouver also, and this was sent up to the hotel for us.

On the Trans-Canada train we had chummed up with a man named Fulforth, who was a reporter on the *San Francisco Examiner*, and we had promised to look him up when we arrived. This we did, and, during the succeeding few days and nights, he very kindly showed us round quite a lot. He was full of apologies for the knock-out blow which Prohibition had dealt to the more hectic side of the notorious night-life of the city, but he did his best to show us what was left of it, and how to keep filled—and how to empty—the hip-flasks which every diner was expected to produce and share at meal-times. The “Barbary Coast”, that one-time roaring dock-side district of ill-fame, was still trying to rattle its bones, but all the old-time booze-engendered wildness and zest had departed from it. As a fact, we found it very tame and not at all amusing. The highly respectable Tait’s, on O’Farrell Street, was more fun.

One day George and I took a one-dollar sight-seeing trip in a motor-coach, complete with a leather-lunged lecturer who bellowed at us continually through a megaphone from a high-perched seat erected over the near front wing, and facing backwards towards his flinching audience. Pretty nearly everything we saw was apparently either the largest, the longest, the highest, or the most costly of its kind in the world. Even an unremarkable tunnel through which we passed provided him with the proud announcement that it was “the longest municipally owned tunnel in the world”. But in Golden Gate Park even our bawling friend was forgotten when, having safely passed the “sixty-thousand-dollar-bandstand”, we came to the alluringly named Golden Gate itself, and looked down upon the mile-wide gulf of turquoise-blue water between whose guardian cliffs we were soon to pass. But even as we gazed, the trumpet-tongued tout ranged

alongside, and, pointing across the water, informed us in a raucous whisper that Battery Spencer, on the opposite shore, was "the Highest Land Battery in the World".

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On Sunday morning I awakened with a thrill of excitement. Something good was going to happen! Ha! To-day we were sailing for Honolulu, Yokohama, Kobe, Shanghai—and the very lilt of their names was like the fanfare of an army marching with banners. Hooray!

The sordid, but apparently necessary, details of packing and paying our hotel bill were soon settled and done with, and a taxi took us to Pier 35, where the *Nippon Maru* was lying.

Do you know that feeling of expectation and excitement that grips your heart when, above the intervening sheds, you catch your first glimpse of the soaring masts and lazily-smoking funnels of "your steamer"? Do you remember that strange and alien feeling that overcomes you as you climb the gangway, beneath the quizzical gaze of fellow passengers, to the unknown deck, and are led through bewildering alleyways to your cabin—that little cubby-hole within the vast mechanism which is to be your very own through all the unguessed adventures and experiences that are to come?

Everything in the whole situation is so completely new. Divorced from all previous ties—social, commercial, and perhaps matrimonial—any passenger, man or woman, may assume and act, for the duration of the voyage, almost any chosen rôle, provided, of course, that no one who knows the unromantic truth is there to give the show away. Snobs become super-snobs, benedicts become bachelors, and a wife becomes a Woman.

George said: "Did you notice that awfully pretty little girl leaning over the rail beside that rather nasty-looking old man with a bottle-nose? I wonder if she is his daughter?"

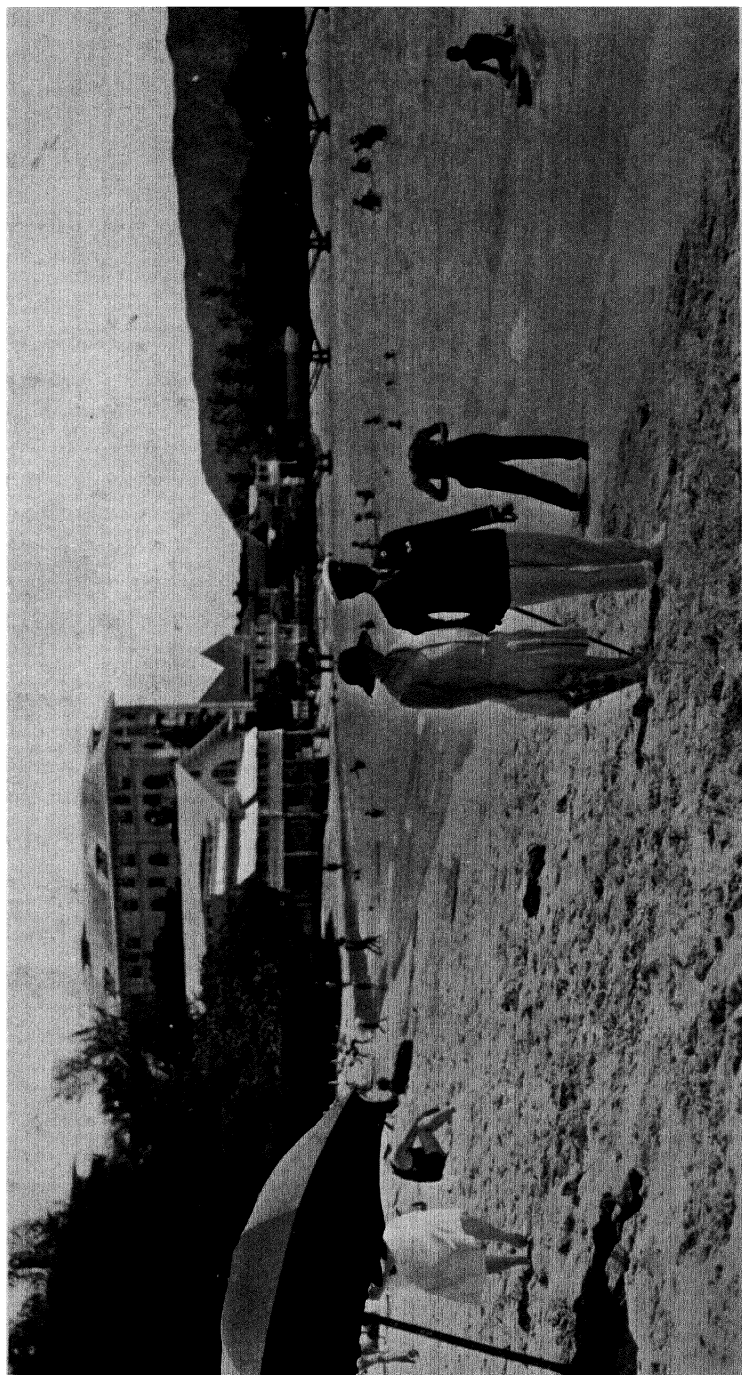
"Wife, probably," I answered discouragingly. "Why?"

"Oh, nothing," said George.

We sailed at one o'clock, and half an hour later passed through Golden Gate into the open Pacific, whose long sweeping rollers soon banished from George's mind any present thoughts of dalliance or philandering. Later, however, he became accustomed to the swing of the vessel over the swells, and, during the days that followed, showed an increasing moral obliquity of which I should never have suspected him.

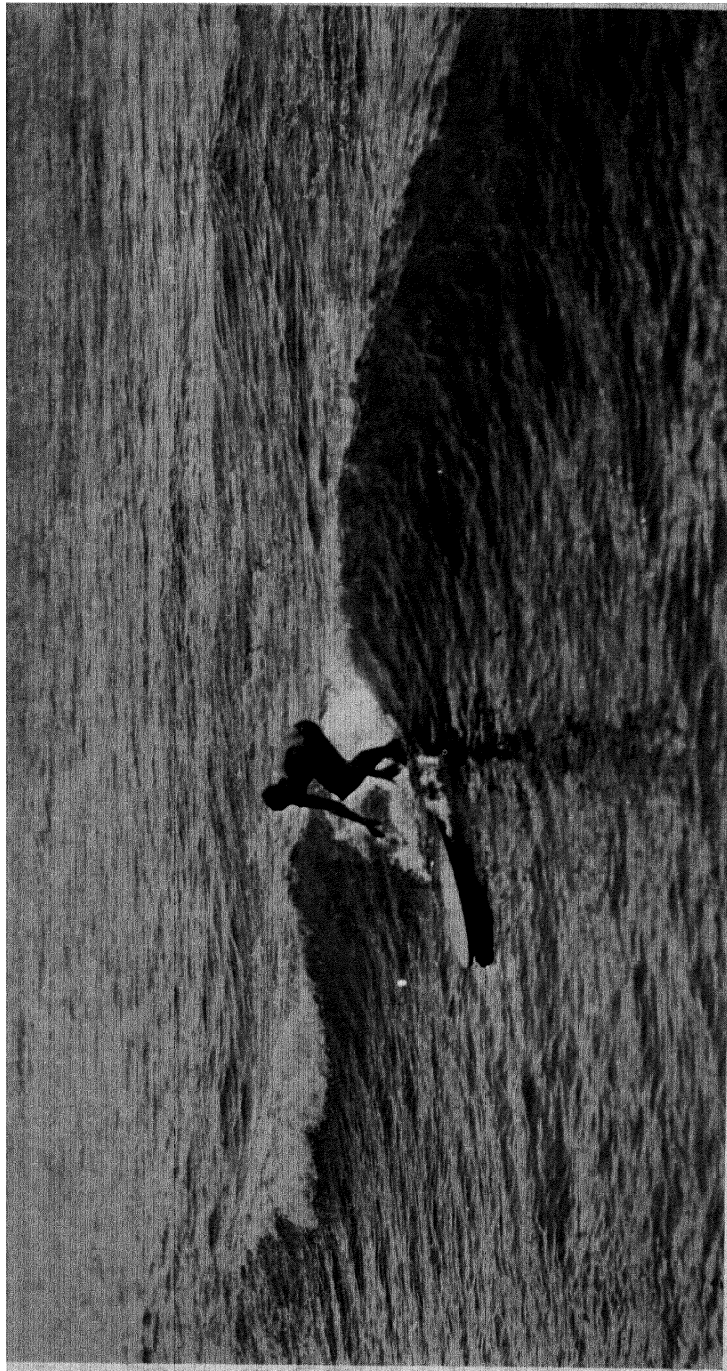
It appeared that the pretty girl he had spotted as soon as he came aboard was indeed the newly-made bride of the rather nasty bit of work with the bottle-nose leaning beside her on the rail, and with regard to whom George had conceived a bitter and prophetic dislike. This trip to Honolulu was, in fact, their honeymoon, but their accommodation had been booked at the very last moment. So crowded was the boat, however, that no two-berth cabin was available, with the result that the bridegroom had to find room in a four-berth cabin with three other men, and his bride was similarly placed in a ladies' cabin. The bridegroom's troubles did not end here, either. He was a shockingly bad sailor, and the long easy roll of the vessel which continued during the greater portion of the whole voyage was entirely too much for him, so that he lay, moaning miserably, day after day, in his crowded cabin.

The bride, however, was up and about and full of beans, and George was her inseparable companion. To do her justice, I must admit that she made infrequent visits to the door of her husband's cabin, and fluted consolingly at him through the keyhole. George, very indignant, in the fastness of our cabin, told me a long and rather involved story of financial complication and consequent parental pressure brought to bear upon the girl, and her final sacrifice to a man twice her age, whom she not only did not care for, but actually held in detestation. Altogether it was rather a mix-up, but George saw himself in the rôle of a knight-errant—so much so, indeed, that at the finish, if I had not used upon him my utmost powers of persuasion, I believe he would have done something



WAIKIKI BEACH.

"At Waikiki the beach shelves steeply. . . ."

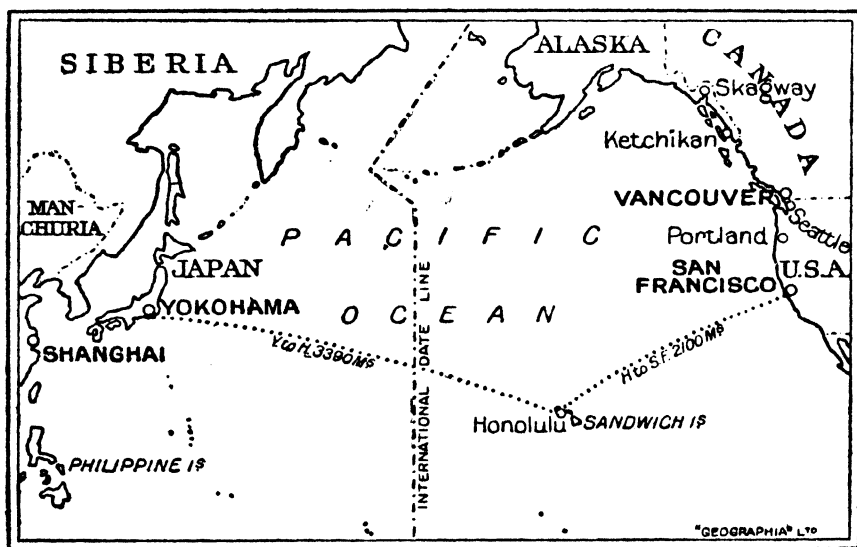


WAIKIKI.

" . . . carrying you along with and slightly in advance of it."

sea bed, and in the forenoon Molokai, one of the eight islands of the Hawaiian Group, heaved its volcanic peaks from the azure sea.

Honolulu, the capital city of the Group, lies on the southern side of Oahu Island, and, coming from the north, it was necessary for us to pass between Molokai and Oahu, and so turning west and north, approach the city from the south.



SAN FRANCISCO—HONOLULU—YOKOHAMA

At 2.30 Oahu, a mountainous island, with billowing clouds looking like cotton-wool shrouding its jagged peaks, lay on our starboard beam, and, as we swung west and skirted the coast, we could see through our glasses the long-backed breakers foaming on the coral reefs, the palm-trees fringing the golden beaches, the red roofs gleaming through the almost unbelievable green of the foliage, and, for background, the mountains, seamed with purple shadows, lifting their cloud-capped crests into the blue sky.

Honolulu lies clustered on the flats between the mountains and the sea, a busy seaport Americanized to death.

Medical inspection was held on deck. Nothing looks more ridiculous than a row of passengers sucking clinical thermometers, because the necessity for keeping one's lips closed imparts an owlish appearance which only adds fuel to the unholy fire. George, as usual, disgraced himself. Happening to catch my eye, the whole situation proved too much for him, and, with a shattering explosion, his pent-up feelings burst forth, and the thermometer, extruded like a torpedo, shattered itself to fragments in the scuppers.

As soon as the gangway was down George and I dashed ashore and into a taxi, bidding the chauffeur to drive like the wind to Waikiki Beach. To both of us Honolulu meant Waikiki, and, moreover, George, after a painful leave-taking of the little lady—snatched dangerously in our cabin—was in no mood for sauntering round amongst streets and shops. What he wanted was exercise, and plenty of it.

The route to Waikiki leads along the coast on a tram-lined road, and the gardens of the houses bordering it were riotous with vivid colour. Bougainvillea, hibiscus, oleander—startling purples, brilliant scarlets and all the yellows and russets. Glimpsed between the houses and the gardens on our right was the incredibly blue sea and the flash of snow-white surf; on our left was the green of banana groves and the slender grace of coconut palms, whilst behind these was the shadow-flecked mass of the mountains.

And so we came to the Moana Hotel, colonnaded and invitingly white and cool amidst its velvet lawns and shading palms.

We went immediately to the beach, and, without any loss of time, stripped and donned our bathing togs.

At Waikiki the beach shelves steeply to a depth of about four feet and then runs out to sea, at about the same level, for a long way, so that the great deep-sea swells, sweeping in unbroken with the momentum of thousands of miles behind them, rear up in long translucent green walls which totter and topple over in thundering lines about half a mile from the shore, and then come rolling

and tumbling towards the beach in mile-wide terraces of bubbling white foam, which, re-forming, break again in smaller waves closer inshore.

George and I plunged into the sea, had a swim, and then, our first transports abated, sat on the beach squiggling our toes in the hot sand. Quite a number of bathers were in the water, and most of them were surf-riding. Three or four canoes were also skidding shoreward on foaming wave-crests, but most of the swimmers were riding solo on surf-boards. It looked such fun that we decided to have a stab at it. We hired a couple of boards from the attendant, and I was surprised at their size and weight. They were about six feet long by two feet wide by six inches thick, made of a heavy type of wood and shaped to a point, boat-fashion, at the front. It was all we could do to carry them down to the water, but once afloat they were, of course, easier to handle.

Surf-riding is a science, as we were soon to discover. We waded out and swam the boards with us to deeper water where the waves were just curling over and breaking for the second time, but before attempting to do any surf-riding myself, I watched some of the other fellows and tried to pick up a few hints. It looked easy enough! They just waited for a wave, jumped on their boards, and hey presto! they were skimming shorewards at twenty miles an hour. Some of them even stood upright on their boards, and one fellow actually upended his feet and flew along standing on his head!

But when I tried to do it the thing was not so simple.

Four times out of five I miscalculated the speed of the wave and was bowled head over heels, or else I missed the bus altogether and the wave swept past indifferently, leaving me behind bobbing about on my board and feeling a silly ass. Sometimes the heavy plank, fed to the teeth with being handled in such an amateurish manner, rose up on end and fetched me a buffet on the scone, and when, gritting my teeth with determination, I went into a death-grapple with the thing, it turned turtle and nearly drowned me. It was all very difficult, and I looked round to see how

George was getting on. It was a good thing I did, because if I hadn't seen him and managed to lunge sideways, he would have rammed and sunk me the very next minute. For there, advancing upon me like a Juggernaut, and riding the mile-wide crest of a tumbling shelf of foam, was George, yelling triumphantly and clinging to his board with might and main. I side-stepped hurriedly and he passed, travelling like a rocket for the shore. Good for George! Exasperated by my own futile efforts, I was just about to try again when a bronze-skinned Hawaiian, pushing a surf-board in front of him, asked smilingly if he could help with any advice.

According to my new friend, the correct thing to do is to stand waist-deep and facing the beach, holding the floating surf-board to one side and advanced forward a little. Then, watching over your shoulder, you wait for a good wave, one just rearing its crest and ready to break. Just before it reaches you, you take a step forward towards the shore, throw yourself flat on the board so that the nose of it is slightly raised out of the water, and then you paddle like mad with both hands—by which time the wave will have overtaken you. If you are moving at the same speed as the wave—and that is the whole secret of the art—the crest of it will pick you up and carry both you and your board along with and slightly in advance of itself at a tremendous rate, finally shooting you in a smother of spent foam right up the beach.

"Like this," said the Hawaiian with a flashing smile. He allowed three waves to pass us and then took the fourth perfectly, and as he skimmed away he first lay flat, then raised himself to a kneeling position, and finally stood erect, a gleaming bronze statue travelling like an arrow towards the beach.

I tried again, choosing my wave carefully, and, *mirabile dictu*, I too sped, flat on my board, to join George and my smiling brown friend on the shore. By the end of the afternoon, with continual coaching, both George and I had become quite proficient—once I actually achieved a standing surf-ride—and our feelings of

indebtedness to our native instructor, Aukoon Cheung, were profound. There could be no question of payment, his help was so obviously proffered from a sense of pure good fellowship, and at sundown, when he smiled and said that he must go, we could only wring his brown hand and thank him warmly.

We knocked off soon afterwards—it is strenuous work handling the heavy boards—and it was with a pleasant feeling of languor and well-being that we dressed and entered the great hotel.

After all the salt water we had swallowed, one desire consumed us—a drink—a cocktail for preference—with ice tinkling in it. So we sat down in the lounge and rang the bell, and who should appear noiselessly before us, his lissome figure clad in spotless white, but Aukoon Cheung, our surf-board expert. There was no embarrassment on either side. Why should there be? Cheung the demure waiter in the hotel, and Cheung the bold swimmer naked in the sea, were both gentlemen—charming, respectful and helpful. Perhaps especially helpful to George and me, for, on learning our urgent need, he managed to produce a couple of drinks so long, so cool, so alluring, and so entirely satisfying, that they were worth even all that we paid for them.

We took the tram back to Honolulu, dined at the Alexander Young Hotel, and afterwards sauntered through the town to see what we could see. The pavements were thronged with strollers: Hawaiian girls in silk blouses and skirts, and bare feet; American soldiers in their light drill uniforms; U.S. naval officers and men in white—all tanned so deeply that it was difficult to tell whether or not they were natives.

We slept on board, but at sunrise next morning were again in the tram on our way to Waikiki Beach for a final swim. The *Nippon Maru* was sailing at 10 a.m., and this last opportunity was too good to miss. It was a most wonderful morning, and the golden sands, the rolling surf, and the rustling palms were all, and more than all, that the most romantic fiction produced by the Honolulu

Publicity Bureau could lead one to expect. We were soon in the milk-warm sea—its temperature all the year round maintains an average of about 70°—trying our luck again with the boards.

Cheung hailed us with a shout—the lad evidently lived in the water when he was off duty—and produced one of the hotel out-rigger canoes for us. This was glorious fun. Cheung sat at the back, keeping a wary eye over his shoulder for a suitable wave, and with his broad-bladed steering paddle held the craft bows on to the beach. Then, at his sharp yelp of command, George and I dug furiously, propelling the canoe forward, until the wall of tumbling water caught us, lifted us, and with a swoop swept us along on its foaming crest towards the shining sands. There is no finer sport in the world than to ride the white crest of a swift-rushing Pacific comber at sunrise on the beach at Waikiki.

At nine o'clock we breakfasted in the great cool dining-room of the Moana Hotel, and arrived back on the wharf just ten minutes before sailing time.

What a wonderful business is this Honolulu farewell to departing liners! Crowds of native girls swarm on the pier, and every embarking passenger is decorated by them with *leis*—garlands of beautiful flowers. These *leis* suit some people very well, but a fat old man looks rather a figure of fun with the protuberance of his waistcoat ornamented and emphasized by ropes of tropical blossom. And it is usually the fat old men who do get most of the *leis*. Perhaps the reasons are threefold: the girls know that fat old men usually have the most money; that fat old men are more flattered than young ones at the attentions of dusky South Sea maidens, and that consequently the monetary reaction is likely to be greater; and thirdly, that, in any event, the cash possibilities are unlimited, whilst the risk is nothing because the delighted old gentleman is leaving Honolulu in ten minutes' time. Many a gay old dog loaded with *leis* and surrounded by laughing brown maidens must have renewed his youth like the eagle, and wondered if he couldn't fix it to stay over until

the next boat, not realizing, the poor boob, that it is only because he *is* going that the girls are making such a fuss of him.

Good-byes are said, the gay old sport snatches a kiss and hopes his wife isn't looking, and dammit, anyhow; and, as the ropes are loosed and the great vessel begins to drift almost imperceptibly from the wharf, there arises the plaintive melody of *Aloha Oe*, the Hawaiian song of farewell, sung by the girls and twanged on languishing steel guitars. The vessel shudders with the first ponderous swirl of her great propellers, the engine-room telegraphs clang, and, with her rails lined with fluttering handkerchiefs, she slowly gathers speed and moves away splendidly to the open sea.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN

WESTWARD HO !

SAILING on a course slightly north of due west, the good ship *Nippon Maru* was now clipping along at a fourteen-knot gait on her three thousand four hundred mile run to Yokohama. Day after day the sun rose above a cloudless horizon and blazed down from a blue sky upon a still bluer sea. Day after day we moved alone upon the face of the waters ; not a sign of life in sea or sky save our own little cockle-shell squattering precariously across unimaginable deeps.

Relieved from the obsessing thraldom of his latest love affair, George blinked his eyes and began to take a more or less intelligent interest in his surroundings.

On a fairly long voyage—and ten days would elapse before we sighted Japan—one naturally drops into a kind of routine. Coffee at 7.30 a.m. in the cabin, brought by our white-clad Japanese steward—short, sturdy, and eternally smiling out of his brown, wooden-looking face ; a cold sea-water bath at 8.15 ; breakfast at 9—and what a breakfast they serve on these boats ; even to read through the menu took ten minutes—10 p.m. to 11 p.m. games : shuffle-board, quoits, deck tennis, deck golf, ping-pong, with *bouillon* to keep the wolf from the door at 11 o'clock ; lunch at 1 p.m.—a constant struggle between one's conscience and one's appetite ; games, a snooze, a chat, afternoon tea and more games until 6 p.m. ; a bath, dressing, cocktails in the bar, and dinner at 7 p.m. ; a cinema show, dancing, the bar, story-swapping, a final drink, and bed at 11 p.m. That was one's usual programme.

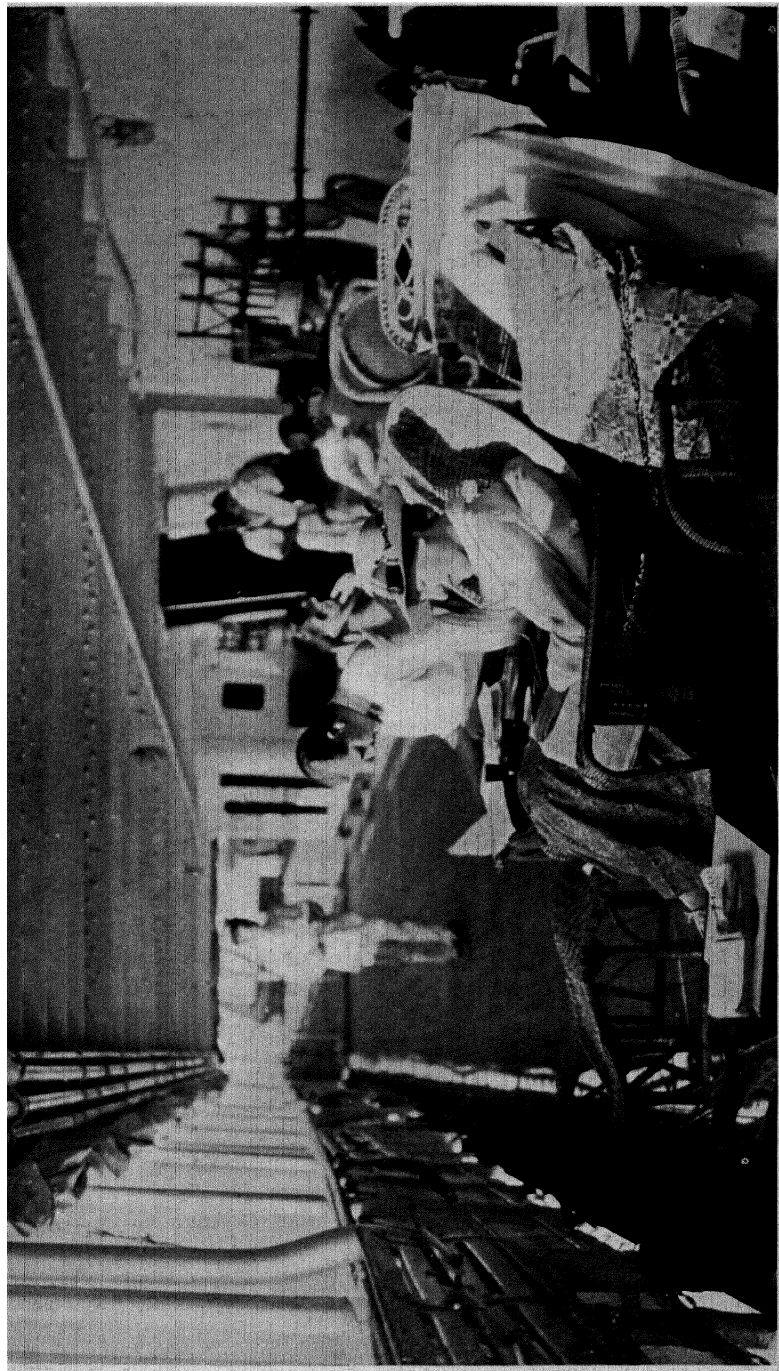
Friendships developed, antipathies arose, personalities unfolded, gossip was born and grew apace, cliques formed, life-and-soulers nagged, comics emerged.

There was one man, a Yorkshireman, who became the joke and the friendly butt of the ship—an extraordinary little man on a commercial mission to the Far East on behalf of a Bradford textile house. When his epitaph comes to be written, just three words should be carved upon his tombstone: "He Meant Well". Absolutely harmless and good-hearted, he sought perpetually and rather pathetically for an abiding friendship that he never seemed able to achieve. He did not "belong" anywhere, but wandered from group to group seeking for something that ever eluded him. He possessed a little store of strange accomplishments, being a mimic of almost professional skill. His personation of a clutch of newly-hatched chicks, peeping and cheeping within his cupped hands, was exceptionally lifelike, whilst his celebrated imitation of sawing a leg off a chair was a masterpiece of perverted ingenuity.

He was also able to reproduce in a most realistic manner the auspicious sound made by a cork when withdrawn from a bottle, followed by the alluring gurgle of phantom liquid into a non-existent tumbler. This imitation, when well timed—say at about 11 o'clock in the morning—and performed within the hearing of a group of men, invariably caused a sudden cessation of conversation, a questioning interchange of glances, and an immediate adjournment to the bar—the ingenious mimic trailing hopefully in the rear.

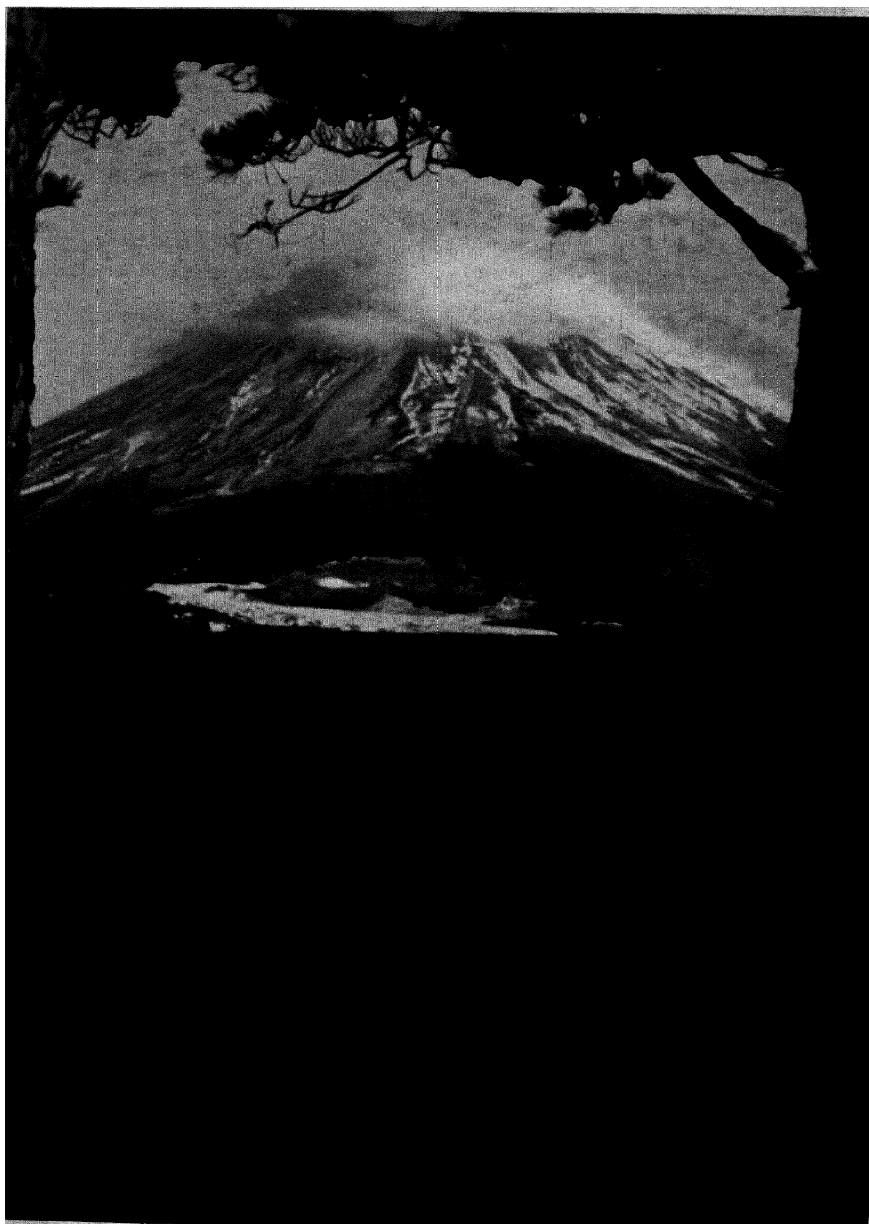
George, quite unaccountably, christened him "Nazzy"—a contraction of Nazimova—and Nazzy he became to all the ship's company. He didn't mind at all—indeed, he was secretly pleased at his nickname, showing, as it did, that he had at least attained to some kind of prominence.

Nazzy was very fond of gin—he always quaffed half a glass, neat, in his bath-tub night and morning—but his potations never showed at all in his behaviour or his conversation until, quite suddenly and with no preliminary



"On a fairly long voyage one naturally drops into a kind of routine."

(see page 135)



JAPAN.

~~with~~ *that loveliest of mountains—Fuji-yama.*"

(see page 140)

midnight line reaches the Date Line again it is for an instant Monday over practically the whole world; then Tuesday begins, and so on. Thus for the greater part of the twenty-four hours Hawaii has the same day-name as San Francisco, and Yokohama the same day-name—one day later than the day of Hawaii—as Australia.

All of which was Greek to George, who only felt an acute sense of grievance and bereavement at losing one whole day out of his life. To be told that he could regain his lost day by crossing the Pacific in the opposite direction was little consolation to him, because he said gloomily that when that happened he would probably be such an old fossil that the extra day wouldn't be much use to him. As for Nazy, he gave it up altogether, and after wondering whether the Steamship Company was charging him for a day he'd never had, he drew apart and moodily made a noise like a phantom gin-and-tonic.

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On Wednesday, a week later, we met strong head winds, blowing half a gale from the north-west, and this slowed our progress considerably, but, even so, we were told that we should reach Yokohama on the evening of the following day. This being the case, the usual Last-Night-Concert was held, when the passengers' vocal and histrionic powers, until now more or less batted down, were allowed free vent.

Ladies hitherto unnoticed carolled blithely in the hope that indifferent males would realize their neglected charms when it was too late to do anything about it, whilst Nazy produced enough chicks to populate a poultry farm and sawed the legs off a whole dining-room suite. His famous imitation of bottle-and-glass was, however, almost too successful, inasmuch as half the men rose and left the concert to slake a thirst suddenly rendered insupportable.

But the success of the evening was scored by a retiring little man wearing gold-rimmed eye-glasses who, during

the whole voyage, had taken no part whatever in the social life of the ship. In fact, when George and I saw the name of Mr. Ramsbotham on the programme, we wondered who he could be. It was only when he stood up to sing that we remembered him as an indistinct little figure creeping about shyly on unfrequented decks.

Mr. Ramsbotham took his stance beside the piano and elongated his skinny neck in preparation for his song—and one naturally expected to hear emerge a faint and throaty piping sound. But an amazed and incredulous silence greeted his first bell-like note. It seemed quite incredible that such a volume of deep and sonorous sound could issue forth from so frail and insignificant a figure.

His song was entitled, "Sweetheart! Come back to Me," and if the woman he addressed were still alive she must have surely heard him—wherever she was. It was a magnificent effort, and in response to deafening applause he gave as an encore, "Honolulu, I love you!"

When the concert was over he was the recipient of much liquid congratulation, and at a late hour was put to bed still bellowing love-songs with all the strength of his amazing basso-profondo voice.

It was his swan-song. We never saw him again.



CHAPTER SIXTEEN

YOKOHAMA

At noon on Thursday, eleven days out from Honolulu, we sighted the coast of Japan—wild, rugged, mountainous, and of a uniform brown colour. As we approached more closely to Tokyo Bay, the marvellous seamed and snow-covered cone of that loveliest of mountains, Fuji-Yama, with its base veiled in grey mist, slowly materialized out of the empty sky and hung there, miraculous, poised like a white wraith.

It was a fitting introduction to Japan—the Land of the Rising Sun, of temples and *torii*, of lanterns and torches, of babies and kites, and cherry blossom ; Chrysanthemum Land.

Late in the afternoon we entered the Bay of Tokyo, a wide estuary crowded with shipping of all shapes and sizes, from the majestic liner to the strange-looking sampans with their ribbed and square-shaped sails. Darkness fell as we swung into place alongside the wharf, and the glow of paper lanterns on the waiting rickshas made moving spots of colour in the soft dusk. We had sent a wireless message to the Grand Hotel, and almost before the gangway was down a representative was bowing and hissing with indrawn breath before us. This hissing intake of breath is a mark of respect, an audible attempt to prevent the contemptible exhalations of the miserable suppliant from discommoding the Honourable Presence of the Most High and Noble One. But until one gets used to it, it sounds as if the man wanted to groom one

like a horse. We indicated our little heap of luggage to him, and, slipping down the gangway to the dimly lit wharf, walked over to the ricksha line and engaged one each.

There is an art in mounting these high, rubber-tyred white-cushioned pull-carts—a trick which helps the ricksha-boy as well as yourself. I found—not the first time, but later—that by waiting to sit down until the boy was in the very act of raising the shafts, the impetus of the act of sitting down helped to cant the ricksha backwards, and thus eased the lift. With practice, mounting a ricksha becomes a co-ordinated act, and a very quick one at that.

However, on this first occasion I scrambled in clumsily enough, and, uttering the two words, “Grand Hotel”, was soon bowling down the wharf, George following.

I shall never forget that first ricksha ride, for it was made under ideal conditions. The night was warm and the sky blazed with stars. The wharf and the streets through which we passed were dimly lit, and the little tubular paper lantern dangling from the shaft swayed to and fro and gave, not only light, but a kind of fairy-land atmosphere to the whole proceeding. The only sound was the steady pad-pad of the boy's feet and the infrequent ting-ting of his little bicycle bell as he trotted along and shaved past other rickshas flitting like fireflies through the silent streets.

In a very short while he turned left into the sweeping carriage-drive of the Grand Hotel, and, the shafts being lowered, I stepped out.

The first thing you are up against in a strange country, of course, is the question of language and money. We solved the difficulty of this first ricksha ride in a very cowardly manner by telling the hotel porter to settle up for us—much to the chagrin of the ricksha boy. As a matter of fact, we found the currency very easy to understand, the system being decimal. All we had to remember was that one yen contained one hundred sen. A yen was worth half-a-crown, so that ten sen amounted to threepence, and one sen was approximately a farthing. That

was all that concerned us, because, although there were copper coins, called rin, ten of which made up one sen, they never seemed to enter into our scheme of life. Paper money is used for amounts from one yen upwards, and silver and nickel coins for sen in multiples from five sen upwards.

We secured a large double-bedded room in the hotel at thirteen yen a day each, all meals and service included. It seemed a pretty steep price, but we took it, temporarily, at any rate, until we had time to look round.

As regards the language—and this in spite of special opportunities for study which came later—our total vocabulary at the end of our stay in Japan consisted of about half a dozen phrases. The Japanese language is extremely difficult to learn, because the Japanese channels of thought run along totally different lines to those of Europeans. Here is an example taken from Chamberlain's book, *Things Japanese* :

Kono goro ni itarimasbite,
This period at having-arrived,
Bukeyo to mōsu mono wa,
Buddhism that say thing as-for,
tada katojinmin no
merely low-class-people's
shinjinu tokoro to nat-
believing place that having-
te, chūto ijo
become, middle-class thence-upwards
de wa sono dōri wo wakimae-teru
in as-for, its reason discerning-are
bito ga sukunaku; shamon
people (nom.) being-few, religion
to ieba, sōshiki no
that if-one-says, funeral-rite's
toki bakari ni mochiuru koto no
time only in employ thing's
yo ni omoimasu.
manner in (they) think.

At the present day, Buddhism has sunk into being the belief of the lower classes only. Few persons in the middle and upper classes understand its *raison d'être*, most of them fancying that religion is a thing which comes into play only at funeral services.

George and I learnt how to say "Good morning", "Thank you", "Don't mention it", "Good evening",

“Good night”, and “Good-bye”, all of which, it will be noticed, are polite phrases. There is, as a fact, no means of cursing and swearing in Japanese, and the language is practically devoid of terms of abuse. With the exception of the above phrases, therefore, we relied upon our mother tongue.

It was more by good luck than good management that we happened to arrive in Japan just at the time of year when the weather was likely to be reasonably fine. From the latter part of October to the end of the year the sky is generally clear and the atmosphere still, whereas from April to July, and in September and October, it rains nearly every other day. When one goes abroad one unconsciously takes it for granted, somehow, that the weather will be always fine and sunny—that only poor old England gets the fogs and the wet days. It is not so, of course, for the weather in Japan can be, and often is, just as cold and dreary and depressing as a wet day in Manchester. On second thoughts, not quite so depressing, perhaps, because the little Japanese ladies pattering about on their tiny stilted clogs are definitely more pleasant to contemplate than Manchester business men in bowler hats.

For the first day and a half we wandered about in Yokohama in rickshas. We should have preferred to walk, but the ricksha-boys would not let us. On the first morning, as soon as we showed ourselves on the steps of the hotel, all the boys rushed towards us, holding up their hands like lads at school and shouting, “Ricksha-sha!” We said, “No, thank you; we’ll walk!” But they wouldn’t believe it. Apparently no foreigner is ever allowed to walk in Japan, and in self-defence we finally capitulated and each climbed into a machine.

These boys were clad in their winter garb, which consisted of a wide saucer-shaped hat, worn bottom upwards, a blue tunic, skin-tight blue hose, and rope sandals made with two divisions, one for the big toe and the other for the remaining toes. Their summer costume consists merely of a pair of drawers.

The usual fare is from fifteen sen to twenty-five sen—4½d. to 7½d.—an hour, so that one can engage a ricksha for a whole day without seriously depleting the exchequer. An ordinary working ricksha costs about three pounds, and the boy's total outfit—coat, hat, drawers, and lantern—about another ten shillings, so that for a total expenditure of three pounds ten shillings a coolie can set up for himself as a hackney carriage proprietor. Some of them work on their own account, but most of them are employed by a master, who owns perhaps thirty or forty of the machines.

I told the ricksha-boys to take us to Creek Street, and it was an extraordinarily interesting experience. Real Japanese streets are totally unlike anything European. In the first place there are no horses; everyone is riding in rickshas or walking about all over the road. And children abound everywhere; little girls in brightly coloured kimonos playing at skipping-rope, with tiny babies bobbing about on their backs; little boys playing at battledore and shuttlecock; grown-ups jostling to and fro; and ricksha-boys—moving at a quick walking pace—dodging in and out and ringing their little bicycle bells. The shops—wooden frames with paper walls which are removed to expose the interior—are every one hung with gaily painted banners and signs.

Our boys wanted us to stop at every other shop—they draw a commission on purchases—but we just waved them on. Everything was small and dainty and toylike, and altogether fascinating.

The sides of the road were crammed with street stalls—pipe-menders, toy merchants, sandal vendors, all busy and smiling. One of the most popular seemed to be the children's cooking stall—a copper cooking stove. You see a tiny little mite—looking just like a doll with its gaily coloured kimono, its beady black eyes, its chubby face and shaven head complete with top and side knots—put down its coin—one of the copper coins of which you can get about a thousand for ninepence—receive a block

of dough, and proceed to cook it. These stalls were always surrounded by little children looking preternaturally solemn and very wise, and you would really think they were all dolls, if only their noses did not run. It is not polite to blow the nose in Japan.

On Saturday, the second day after our arrival, we went, along with many of the other passengers who had travelled on the *Nippon Maru*, to take afternoon tea at the residence of Mr. Soichiro Asano, the President of the Toyo Kisen Kaisha Steamship Line. This invitation was apparently a customary one issued to all passengers on the arrival of one of the firm's liners in Yokohama.

As Mr. Asano lived near Tokyo, we had to take one of the electric trains, which run every twelve minutes between the two cities, to Tomachi, and thence travel for a short distance, in a fleet of very smart private rickshas, to the house itself—a handsome building, or rather series of buildings, constructed very solidly of wood and having widely overhanging eaves, reminiscent in their graceful curves of a Chinese pagoda.

The interior displayed a wealth of beautiful polished woods and examples of Japanese woodcraft. The walls, too, were decorated with delightful paintings, some of figures, but mostly of cherry and plum blossom, each petal being limned in the most minute detail.

One of the most important things to remember when you go a-visiting in Japan is that your socks shall be without blemish, for, on entering any private house, the shoes must be removed and left at the entrance. Sometimes felt slippers are provided for foreigners, and, in fact, Mr. Asano had done this, but George and I, arriving late, found that the supply had become exhausted, and we had to make shift in our stocking feet. Luckily we had been warned, and consequently our socks were perfectly presentable, but poor Nazy, who travelled by the same train as we did, was taken completely by surprise, and, on dubiously doffing his shoes, displayed an enormous hole in his right sock through which his big toe protruded in a most shameful manner. It completely spoilt the

afternoon for him, necessitating as it did a hirpling walk with the toes bent down underneath the foot.

The beauty of the polished wooden floors make it easy to understand why it is the custom to creep about in stocking feet.

The Asano residence was not a true Japanese house, but rather a combination of Eastern and Western styles of building and furnishing. The walls were solid and permanent, and a wide staircase, with newel posts of cloisonné, led upwards to a suite of rooms on the first floor. No doubt the private rooms of the family were furnished—or unfurnished—in the true Japanese manner, but the reception-rooms in which we were entertained contained chairs and small tables of European type. The ceilings, however, were covered with panels of elaborately embroidered silk, and delightful bits of minutely perfect ornamentation met one at every turn—carved friezes and ornamental knobs and handles. The Japanese genius touches perfection in small things.

After inspecting the treasures of the house, Ceremonial Tea was served to us in the large reception-room by Mr. Asano's grand-daughters, who wore kimonos of such vivid and gorgeous beauty as to render the ladies of the party speechless with admiration. A Japanese lady's dress will often represent a value of 200 to 300 yen, without counting the ornaments for the hair, which may be worth as much again.

The tea itself was, as has been said, of the Japanese ceremonial variety, and was, therefore, a kind of broth. It is made not from tea-leaves but from a form of powder, so that the resulting beverage is rather like pea-soup in colour and consistency. With it were served little flat sugar-cakes of pink, green, and white. As a matter of fact, there were two kinds of tea served, that at the beginning being quite thick and soupy and that served towards the end being thinner. This was not at all because the supply was running out, as George thought, but was strictly in accordance with Japanese custom. The cups in which the tea was served were very small—one good suction

emptied them—and of the most dainty and fragile description.

The true Japanese Tea Ceremony is one of the oldest and oddest customs of the country. The tea is made and drunk very slowly and with great formality, each action and each gesture being fixed by an elaborate code of rules. Every article connected with the ceremony, such as the tea-canister, the incense-burner, the hanging scroll, and the bouquet of flowers in the alcove, is either handled or else admired in ways and with phrases which unalterable usage prescribes. The hands are washed, the room is swept, a little bell is rung, and the guests walk from the house to the garden and from the garden back into the house at stated times and in a certain manner which never vary.

To a European the ceremonies may, and mostly do, seem meaningless and very boring, but they were invented by Japanese for Japanese, and, if they amuse them, who are we to find fault? In any case, both the tea and the ceremony are quite harmless, which is more than can be said of tea and tattle.

Of course we clumsy Westerns gulped down the tea and chewed the cakes with unconcerned, because ignorant, disregard of Japanese etiquette, and the courteous Mr. Asano, mindful of our low tastes, later provided the men of the party with whiskies-and-sodas. Nazy, thick-skinned and quite impervious to all the finer feelings, asked for gin—and got it!

Meanwhile, a group of *geisha* entertained us with music on the *samisen*—a banjo-like instrument of three strings. I know that in these days of Stravinsky and Litinsky, to talk of “harmony” and “tune” is to be branded at once as a hopeless Philistine and a dweller in the outer darkness, but even so, Japanese music is difficult to abide. It possesses no harmony, no time, no method, and no tune. I see I have noted in my diary that it sounds as if someone was treading on a pup. Even the Japanese themselves do not take their music seriously; they never talk about it nor is it discussed in their newspapers.

Merry-makers send for singing-girls for the sake of the girls and not for their singing, though no doubt the noise, as a noise, helps the party along.

What interested me more than the music was a very fine juggling performance given by a Japanese conjurer on the platform of a little recessed alcove with a large and valuable *kakemono*, or hanging scroll, as a background. These *kakemonos* take the place of our framed pictures, but the number displayed in any room is limited to one, a pair, or a set of three. Japanese custom also decrees that the *tokonoma*, or alcove, is the only part of the room in which these scrolls may hang, and when there is no special reason for displaying them, they are always carefully rolled up and put away. *Tokonoma* means, literally, the place where you lay the bed, and, in theory, this space, in every Japanese house, is reserved exclusively for the bed of the Emperor should he happen to drop in and decide to stop the night. In practice, however, it is occupied usually by a low, lacquered, spindle-legged table upon which stands a vase containing two or three twigs of tree blossom, arranged with meticulous regard for etiquette and allegorical meaning. The arrangement of flowers is a science, almost a religion, in Japan.

Darkness was falling as we began to make preparations for departure, and the dim light in the entrance-hall was no help in the frenzied search which it was necessary for us to make for our respective shoes. Some idiot who had departed before us had thought it funny to jumble them all together into a hopeless confusion. I do not like handling other people's footgear. They look so dreary and wrinkled and sordid; and anyway, I loathe the smell of boot-polish. Nazy found his left shoe and put it on over his sound sock, but it really looked as if he would have to limp back to Yokohama with his big toe still sticking out for all to see.

Fortunately, things eventually sorted themselves out, but in the midst of the uproar, when most of us were still hopping about with only one shoe on, the dainty little

ladies who had served tea came amongst us with their arms full of little white boxes, which they proceeded to distribute amongst us. These, when we opened them later, were found to contain the sugar-cakes which had been left over from tea. This, again, is a usual Japanese custom, the parcelling up and presentation to departing guests of food uneaten at the banquet.

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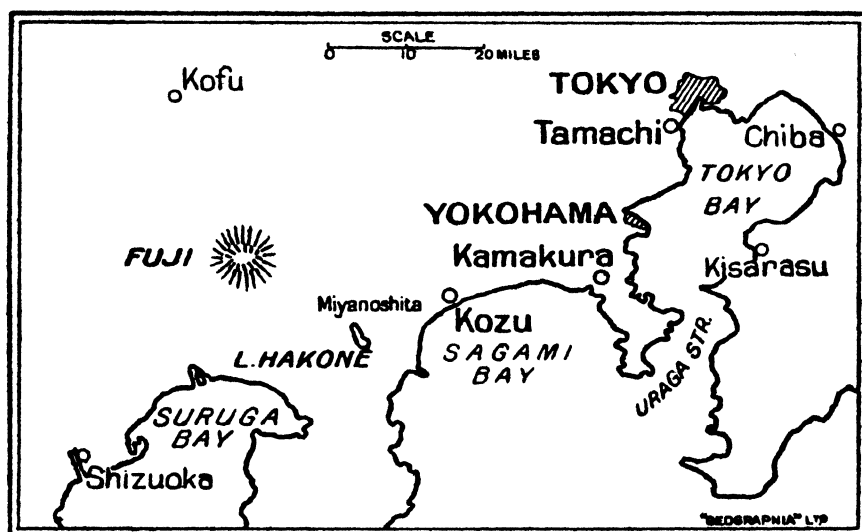
Sunday, in Japan, has, of course, no religious significance, but it is observed as a day of rest and recreation. They have even adopted our English Saturday half-holiday also, its name, *Han-don*, meaning "half-Sunday".

George and I chartered a car to take us to Kamakura to see the big bronze Buddha which has sat there for six hundred years. It is about an hour's run from Yokohama, and it is difficult to say which is more interesting, Buddha himself, or the little toy country we drove through on the way. The dusty and rather ill-made road traversed hilly country and passed through dozens of villages, with their thatched roofs and bamboo fences, every one of them swarming with butterfly children who cried "Banzai" to us as we roared, with open exhaust, on our way.

In the valleys the rice-fields were patterned out, like a chess-board, into squares, and were flanked by abrupt hills, whose sides were cut out into terraces from top to bottom. All high-class rice needs constant flooding, and the irrigation of these hill-side paddy-fields, each enclosed within its low and perforated mud wall, has brought into existence a marvellous system whereby water is led downwards gradually from field to field. When we were there the fields were lying fallow and deserted, for the rice-plant blossoms early in September and is reaped in October.

Several times during the ride we passed mahogany-brown coolies hauling primitive-looking two-wheeled carts. We noted the first one or two, but, beyond a

grimace of discomfort, made no comment. But when we found that the third cart emitted an even more appalling stench than any of its predecessors, we spoke about it to the driver. Thereafter we kept a sharp look-out, and on sighting one we held our noses and our breath until we had passed it. These carts, we learnt, are a familiar feature of the Japanese ensemble. They contain night-soil, practically the only form of manure available, owing to the scarcity of horses. Even cattle are scarce too, because



YOKOHAMA AND DISTRICT

neither their flesh nor their milk is in much demand, beef being regarded as a luxury and milk being looked upon more as a medicine than a food. We certainly saw no cattle, nor, if it comes to that, any sheep or goats nor any droves of geese, turkeys, or pigs. Chickens there were in plenty, however. We must have run over and slain at least half a dozen on the double journey.

Kamakura, once the capital of Eastern Japan, with a population of more than a million, is now a quiet seaside village and a favourite bathing and health resort of the Yokohama and Tokyo residents. Yet no other city in

Japan can boast a more stirring record. Over and over again it rose from ashes, for it was repeatedly sacked, and tidal waves devastated it utterly more than once. It can still, however, show many famous buildings giving evidence of its former glory. But of all its treasures the Daibutsu, the bronze Buddha, stands alone.

The fact that it measured forty-nine feet in height meant little to me; and to be told that its circumference was ninety-seven feet two inches, its face eight feet five inches long, and that the length of each eye was three feet eleven inches, only made me impatient. It is not by mere bulk that the Daibutsu impresses, nor is it because "its eyes are of pure gold and the silver wisdom boss upon its forehead weighs thirty pounds avoirdupois". When, having passed through an avenue of pine trees set in a garden of lawns and lotus ponds, I mounted a short flight of steps and stood before that wonderful figure, I am not ashamed to say that I instinctively, and quite unconsciously, removed my hat. What impressed me so powerfully was the infinite peace and compassion and understanding that was written in the serene countenance of the god. The pose is no less beautiful than the expression, which is one of supreme tranquillity.

Although the name of the artist who designed it is unknown, none but a master could have conceived it. In spite of one's first impression, the god is not in repose, for scrutiny shows that the nearly closed eyes are watchful and alert, so that the attitude is not one of complete ease, but of repression and self-control, in this way symbolizing the central idea of Buddhism—the spiritual peace which comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passion.

For six hundred years the image—which represents Amida, sole Buddha of the Jodo Shinshu sect—has rested there, in the beginning beneath the shelter of a temple roof, but now framed in pines and cherry trees, like some great guardian spirit:

A statue solid-set
and moulded in colossal calm.

George said, "Come on, it's hollow inside, and we can climb up into its head and get a lager beer."

So we entered the god from behind and climbed up a ladder into its head. Within it is a small shrine dedicated to the Goddess of Mercy. I told George he ought to put up a prayer to it because when his time comes mercy is what he will need, not justice.

High on the slopes of one of the surrounding hills, and framed in maple leaves which the autumn had turned crimson, was the Temple of Kwannon. Long flights of grey old steps led upwards to it, and from its timeworn balconies we looked out, on one side, over rice-fields covering the Kamakura plain like a patchwork quilt, and on the other, over a crescent bay of silver sand on which the long rollers of the Pacific tumbled in lines of white foam. The great thirty-foot image of the goddess stands within a pitch-dark room behind the altar, and we had to donate the sum of fifty sen to the wrinkled old priest before he would show it to us. He lit two candles in an iron frame and drew them slowly upwards, their light, as they rose, illuminating feebly the nearest portion of the colossal figure. It is of brown lacquer, gilded over, and is said to be carved out of a single bole of a camphor tree.

In the same temple were two images of the ferocious-looking god named Ni-Ō, who keeps guard to scare away demons. Stuck all over them were little pellets of paper which puzzled us until we learned that every pilgrim, as he passes, chews a sheet of rice-paper to pulp and throws it or spits it at one of the figures. If it sticks, well and good, his wish will come true. These gods are usually to be found one at each side of the outer gate of temples, figures of gigantic size and terrific appearance.

There are two religions in Japan, Shintō and Buddhism, but they are so interfused that if you ask the average Japanese what his religion is, whether Buddhist or Shintō, he will be hard put to it to tell you. It is the custom to present infants at the Shintō family temple one month after birth, but, on the other hand, it is equally customary

to be buried by the Buddhist parish priest. The family shrine in every household, however, the numerous temples, and the multitudes who still make pilgrimages, go to show that the Japanese, in spite of their disregard of dogma and the vagueness of their beliefs, are neither irreligious nor undevotional. The religion of the family—filial piety—is a sacred thing and is universal; that, and a fervent and burning loyalty to the sacred heaven-descended Mikado.

Shintō is a compound of nature-worship and ancestor-worship. It has gods and goddesses of the wind, the ocean, fire, food, and pestilence, of mountains and rivers, of trees and temples, and many of phallic origin. Less than fifty years ago shrines adorned with emblems of the phallic cult were to be found all over the country, and processions and other ceremonies were performed in their honour. But this naturalistic worship has now vanished under the influence of modern ideas.

Shintō has scarcely any regular services in which the people take part, and the dress of the priests in no way differs from that of the ordinary people except when they are engaged in presenting the morning and evening offerings. They likewise are under no vows, and marry as a matter of course.

The sum of the Shintō theory is: "Follow your natural impulses, and obey the Mikado's decrees." The continued existence of the dead is believed in, but whether it is an existence of joy or pain is nowhere declared.

On the other hand Buddhism, in its Chinese form, entered Japan, via Korea, in the sixth century, and there are some six different sects, divided into about forty subjects, in Japan to-day, the points in dispute between them being highly metaphysical and technical.

Put briefly, Buddhism teaches that all happiness and salvation come from within—from the recognition of the impermanence of all phenomena; from the extinction of desire, which is at the root of life, life itself being at the root of all sorrow and all imperfection. Asceticism—but asceticism of the mind rather than of outward observances, its ultimate object being absorption into

Nirvana, which some interpret to mean annihilation, while others describe it as a state in which the thinking substance, after numerous transmigrations and sanctifications, attains to perfect beatitude.

The highest truths of Buddhism are quite incomprehensible even to life-students. That being so, the priests have evolved a form of worship more suited to the capacity of the ordinary man, and by the aid of pious devices, such as charms, amulets, pilgrimages, and gorgeous temple services, in which the people worship Buddha—who was an agnostic—and his disciples, the priesthood play into the hands of popular superstition.

When we went to Nikko we bought paper prayers from the priests for one sen each, and popped them into a kind of trough in front of those gods which, by reason of their ferocity, it seemed most desirable to appease. George, after some hesitation, deposited a large handful in the receptacle of a certain deity who possessed a flaming halo, three eyes, six arms, and fierce eyebrows that curled upwards in a most terrifying manner, and it was only when it was much too late to do anything about it that he discovered he had made petition to the goddess who was supposed to grant the prayers of childless women.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WE HOUSE-KEEP IN JAPAN

THE tea-houses of Japan are a national institution. You can seldom reach any famous viewpoint without passing through or under a tea-house of sorts where gay little mousmees (Jap.: *musumé*, a girl), rubbing their knees together and bowing and hissing, waylay you to give you tea. Such tea-houses as these are more like little canopies set within a garden. They are of many kinds, however; they may have exquisite old terraces overhanging a lake, like that of Hakone, which faces the sacred mountain of Fuji-Yama; they may be overhung with fragrant wistaria blossoms, four feet long, which sweep the waters of the running stream over which they are built; or they may be a collection of dainty little dolls' houses built of sweet-scented pine wood. In any case, the dolls are always there, the pretty little mousmees who unlace and remove your shoes for you and serve you with tea.

Mr. Heine, the *compradore* of the Grand Hotel, who, of course, knew Yokohama inside out and spoke the language fluently, was a friendly soul, and, when we asked him to do so, willingly agreed to accompany us on the Monday afternoon. We set off in three rickshas, visited several native shops, at which, with his help, we made some very cheap purchases, and at nightfall, after traversing the Bluff, which is the European residential quarter, called in for dinner at a tea-house on the shores of Mississippi Bay.

In a garden gaily decorated by lighted paper lanterns

were three or four tiny thatched houses, and, after a colloquy with the proprietor, Heine led us across a pebbly path to one of them. It consisted of just one room surrounded by paper walls and with a highly polished wooden floor covered with large straw mats ; no chairs, no tables, and no furniture of any kind save a small charcoal brazier. But in another moment three charming little mousmees came pattering across the pebbles, each bearing a small lacquered table standing on short legs not more than six inches high. Following Heine's example, we squatted down on the mats, and the tables were placed in front of us. I very soon found that this squatting position was a most uncomfortable one, and during the subsequent meal I passed a very restless time. I sat with my legs first on one side and then on the other. That being no good, I stuck them straight out in front of me. I even tried kneeling, but to no better purpose. I looked round hopefully at the walls, but these, being of paper, were not strong enough to lean against. At last, however, I managed to edge up into a corner and rest my back against one of the slender pine-wood corner pillars, which eased matters considerably. Meanwhile Heine squatted immovably, as if to the manner born, whilst George, for reasons which will become apparent, was too occupied in other directions to be aware of physical discomfort.

Each course of the meal was brought to us by the little mousmees, who knelt down before our separate little tables and served us. First and last and all the time came *sake*, an alcoholic liquor made from rice, which, as George remarked after the tenth cup, tasted rather like weak sherry which had been kept in a beer-bottle. It is served warm, and if you delay drinking it until it becomes too cold, your mousmee takes it away and replaces it with a fresh supply and a look of reproach. If, on the other hand, you drink it at once, she immediately refills your tiny cup. The result is that, during the meal, one drinks a considerable quantity.

I cannot pretend to describe every course in detail, although Heine explained each one as it arrived. There

was a kind of bean-curd soup, followed by baked fish-balls, an omelette, bits of chicken boiled with lotus-roots in a sort of sweet liqueur named *mirin*, sea-slugs served with vinegar—I did not eat mine, but they were handed to me in a box when we left—boiled seaweed, and rice with pickled egg-plant. The only implements we had to eat with were chop-sticks, and neither George nor I could do much with them at first. Heine showed us how to hold them, however, and I was relieved to find that it was considered quite admissible to lift the tiny dishes, with their contents, to our mouths, and use the chop-sticks as shovels rather than pincers.

During the progress of the meal I noticed that George seemed to be getting on extraordinarily well with his mousmee. Unlike the other two girls, she was able to understand English and to speak it hesitantly with a fascinating accent, and George, paying no attention whatever to what he was eating—which was, perhaps, as well—talked with her continuously. In fact, so wrapt up in each other did they become, that very soon his dinner lagged many courses behind ours, the two of them being quite content to squat side by side and talk. She was a tiny little person, almost a child in appearance, although she was actually eighteen years of age, with the high cheekbones, slightly flattened nose, and dark upward-slanting eyes of her race. She was dressed, like the others, in a kimono of bright colours bound about her slim waist with a broad sash, her black hair was like a smooth and glistening helmet, and, as she pattered to and fro, one caught a glimpse of brown ankles above her short white socks (*tabi*). She was certainly a most fascinating little person.

I say I noticed they were getting on very well together, but beyond that I thought nothing of it. Indeed, the problem of how to manipulate my chop-sticks engrossed my attention to the exclusion of nearly everything else. Instructed by Heine, I grasped them correctly between the fingers of my right hand, but was at first quite unable to separate them and close them firmly, pincer-fashion,

upon a piece of food. Half-way to my mouth they nearly always slipped and flipped the gobbet sideways, making me into a rather messy feeder. But I persevered because I hate to be beaten.

Heine, with our consent, had ordered *geisha*, and half way through the meal three of them appeared, bowing deeply and hissing politely.

The *geisha* is not, as so many seem to think, a professional courtesan. Being human, some of them are no better than they should be, but, *a priori*, a *geisha* is a social entertainer, trained from a very early age to sing and to dance for the delectation and amusement of guests at a dinner-party. Her mission is to make life merry in a more or less innocent way. She can dance and sing, she is elegant and clever, she knows the best stories and the very latest jokes, she is as graceful and frolicsome as a kitten, her manners are exquisite, and her dress is superb. As Douglas Sladen says :

If a banker asks his family lawyer to dinner, the invitation does not embrace their wives ; he asks him to dinner at a restaurant, and engages *geisha*—singers famous for their beauty and their wit, but not necessarily for their morals—to make themselves agreeable to him. The wives of both regard this as a natural feature of hospitality. As you drive through Shiba at night, you will know where the Japanese gentleman is enjoying himself in his primitive way, by large wooden lanterns, with paper glasses and projecting eaves, and by the ricksha boys smoking, and doubtless scandalmongering, at its gates. Sometimes, if the night is hot, and the banqueters have reached the drunken stage, the shutters will be taken down, and you will see the party enjoying itself. The Japanese take their pleasures badly ; the host and guests sit in a semicircle, more or less drugged with gorging and *sake*, and the *geisha* are ranged in another semicircle opposite them, if they still have a soul for music, or come closer and enchant them with their prettiness and their wittiness. The Japanese do not laugh for pleasure any more than they kiss for love ; they have a derisive laugh to show anger, and they giggle at wit, but the hearty English laugh of enjoyment is unknown to them.

Which latter fact was, perhaps, one of the reasons why George's gay spirits and infectious laughter made such havoc with the heart of O-Tori-san.

The three little *geisha* who had come to entertain us seemed to be mere infants, though it was difficult to guess with any accuracy at their precise ages owing to their professional make-up. The little things looked more like gorgeous ornaments than human beings, for their eyebrows were shaved off, their little faces were thickly encrusted with white—one would almost say pipe-clayed—their lips were painted a brilliant crimson, their hair, bedecked with flowers, was piled up in great glossy waves, and they were dressed in marvellously rich and heavily embroidered brocades, so rich, indeed, that movement was restricted by their stiffness. But this did not matter very much, because the so-called dancing of the *geisha* is merely a matter of posturing and arm-waving. Europeans dance with their feet—not to say their legs and hips—but Japanese mainly with their arms, and the dress, or rather undress, of our chorus-girls would horrify a *geisha* beyond measure.

Two of our *geisha* squatted down and proceeded to pluck isolated and unrelated notes from their *samisens*, whilst the third tiny little person, with an utterly immobile face, bowed and waved and turned slowly from side to side. Quite frankly, as a dance it very soon became monotonous, and to me the interest lay entirely in the dainty porcelain figures of the *geisha* themselves. One wondered what thoughts were passing behind those little pipe-clayed foreheads. They seemed so childlike, such gentle and gracious little things, and I said so to Heine.

"Humph," grunted Heine, "the nickname of a *geisha* is 'nekkō'."

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"Cat!" replied Heine, "though why *geisha* should be singled out . . ."

No Japanese dinner in native style, said Heine, is ever given without its attendant *geisha*, and there is usually one at least to every guest. A popular *geisha* is loaded with presents, and retires from the active pursuit of her profession quite young. Then, if she is not married—

and many of them make quite brilliant marriages—she keeps a school for training others. The training period extends over four years, and is as perfect as any dramatic training in the world.

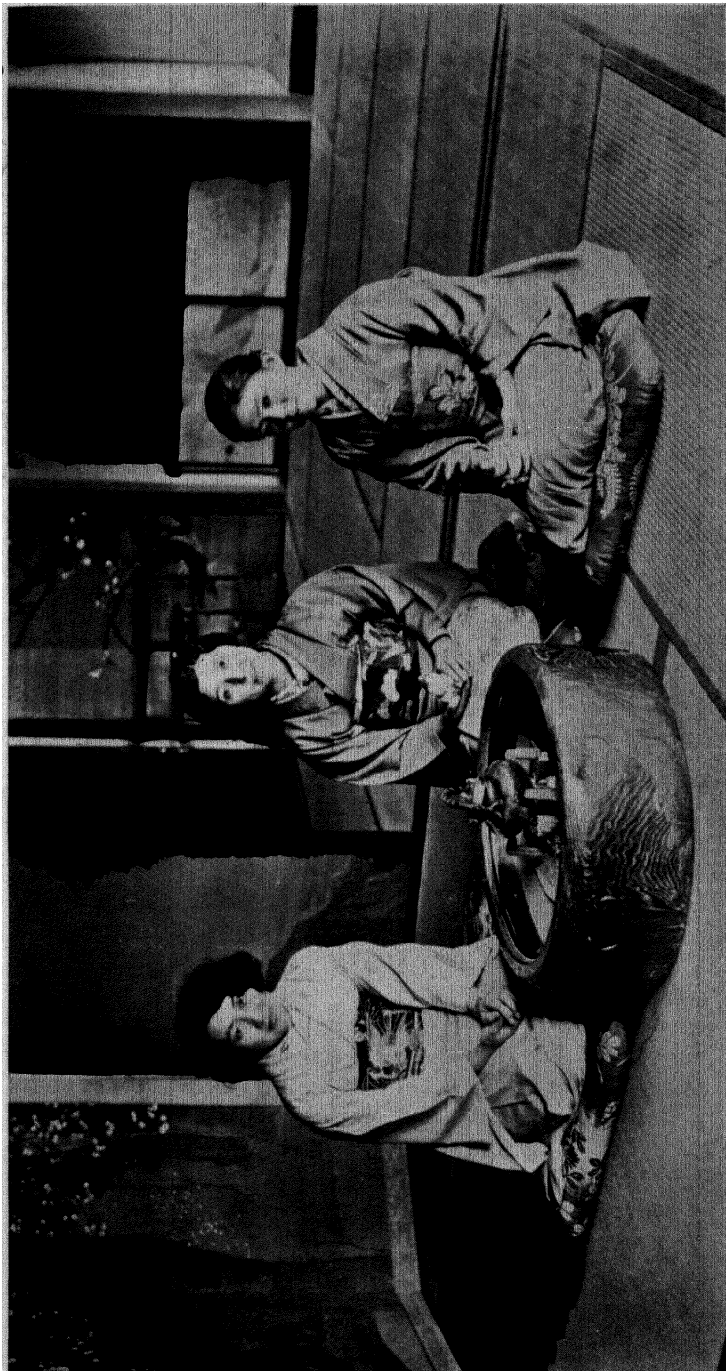
Geisha should not be confused with the *yoro*—the ladies of pleasure and inmates of the Yoshiwara about which I shall have something to say later. The ladies of the oldest profession in the world wear in their hair, instead of flowers, numerous and enormous tortoise-shell pins, and the bows of their sashes are worn in front instead of behind.

At a later date, at a fancy dress ball on board the steamer, a maiden lady, with rather prominent front teeth, turned out in a most beautiful kimono. George, in his helpful way, suggested that the costume was not put on quite correctly, and very gallantly rearranged the sash for her so that the bow was in front. She was very delighted with the effect, and especially so when, to her own surprise but nobody else's, she was awarded, by unanimous vote, the first prize for originality.

Geisha not only attend banquets but are also in great request for picnics and boating parties, and merry-makers out for a jolly time usually take a party of the girls along with them.

When the dancing was over, our three little mites came and knelt beside us to drink *sake* and nibble daintily at sugary cakes, and then, rising to their feet, they bowed low, hissed their polite respectfulness, and withdrew.

So far as George was concerned, the *geisha* dances were utterly wasted. He had eyes for nothing and nobody but his little mousmee, O-Tori-san, a name which Heine told me meant, literally, Honourable Chicken. And, whether it was due to his eye-glass, or to his size and breadth, or to his blond curls and his happy laughter, I do not know, but it was perfectly obvious by now that O-Tori-san was equally captivated by George. And it was with the greatest reluctance, and only after a long whispered conversation, accompanied by many smiles and vigorous noddings of the head on the part of little Tori,



YOKOHAMA.

"The floors were covered with thick mats. . . ."

(see page 162)



"... over which climbed a stairway."

(see page 161)



"Japan is a pleasant land for children."

(see page 169)

YOKOHAMA.

that George finally allowed himself to be led away to our waiting rickshas.

Of what passed between George and myself in our hotel room that night I will say nothing, for, in spite of all my remonstrances and arguments, when morning came he carried out the course of action upon which he had decided. With Heine's amused and tolerant assistance, George actually set up housekeeping with O-Tori-san in a tiny dwelling not far from the tea-house.

Two days later I gave up the lonely room at the Grand Hotel and joined the *ménage*—as an amused and highly interested onlooker.

It was a delightful little house with a garden running down to the waters of the bay, and separated from it by a six foot high embankment over which climbed a stairway leading to a tiny wooden jetty. If it had only been summer-time we could have had some splendid bathing, but, being November, it was rather too cold for that.

The house itself was typically Japanese—that is to say, designed, as they all are, to withstand earthquake shocks by its yielding suppleness. For this reason the framework was very light, the building was not braced in a rigid manner, and the interior partitions were pliant. There was no plastering on the walls to crack and fall; no chimney of brick or stone to topple over, and no glass in the windows to splinter. Neither was the building tied solidly to foundations as is the case with European houses; it stood on legs which rested on rounded, saucer-like stones that would rock with any movement of the earth and settle back into place when the tremors ceased.

Being winter, the walls, during the day, consisted of semi-transparent paper shutters which, at night-time, were covered outside by removable wooden sliding doors, each held in place by the preceding one, the final one being secured by a bolt. There were no windows, the light that filtered through the paper walls being considered quite sufficient. I was given to understand that in the summer-time, when the wooden shutters were removed

in the morning, no paper shutters would take their place, everything being thus left wide open to the air.

The rooms inside were divided from each other by opaque paper screens which ran in grooves at the top and the bottom. By taking out or by inserting these screens, the number of rooms could be diminished or increased at will, and thus space which, at night-time, provided three bedrooms, was, by merely removing the screens, made to form, during the daytime, one large living-room. Each wall was also a sliding door, and the handles were just holes lined with metal.

The floors were covered with thick mats made of rushes and perfectly fitted together so as to leave no spaces between. Each mat—*tatami*—measured 6 feet by 3 feet by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and, as this is the universal measurement for these Japanese floor-mats, the area of a room is usually computed in mats—a 10-mat room 15 feet by 12, a 4-mat room, a $4\frac{1}{2}$ -mat room, and so on.

The little house faced south upon the garden, which was thus sheltered from the cold north wind in winter, and benefited in summer from the breeze which always blows from the south.

An old Japanese woman acted as housekeeper and cook, and Tori had brought along with her a little serving-maid named Hara—a merry little maiden of about twelve years of age.

Save charcoal-burners, there was precious little furniture in the house; no chairs, no washstands, no chests of drawers, no dressing-tables. There certainly was a tiny wall-cupboard in my bedroom, that is to say, in the portion of the central living-room which, by means of paper screens, was made nightly into a bedroom for me—but it housed a little private shrine belonging to the old lady, and every night before she retired to rest along with Hara, the maid, somewhere in the purlieus at the back, she came hissing and bowing, and whether I was in bed or in the act of going to bed made no difference whatever. She came shuffling in, and, sliding back the little paper door, murmured her prayers, ting-tinged upon a

little brass bell within the shrine and then, her dévotions made, she closed the slide, bowed at me, hissed at me, murmured "*O yasumi nasai*", which means "Good night", or, literally, "Deign honourably to rest", and so, still bowing, slid back the wall-screen and disappeared.

The only furniture in my bedroom was the small charcoal brazier—the *hibachi*—which is to be found in every Japanese room. They are of many kinds and shapes, I believe, but mine was like a small chest, about a foot high, one-third of which was occupied by a set of tiny drawers, the remaining portion containing the charcoal and ash. The *hibachi* is filled to within a few inches of the brim with ash, which is heaped up into a cone and a hollow made in the summit. Into this small depression a few glowing embers of charcoal are placed, and they continue to burn without attention for the greater part of the day. The grey ash in my *hibachi* was covered with a white powder—burnt lime I think it was—and every night little Hara used to heap up a fresh cone of ash and delicately mould the sides into furrows so that the whole thing looked like a minute reproduction of snow-capped Fuji-Yama. Although the fire, if such it can be called, was so tiny, it was astonishing how soon it warmed the room, probably because no heat was wasted up a chimney.

I soon learnt that it was very bad form indeed to throw my cigarette ends into the *hibachi*; it is one of those things that are "never done" in Japan. Little O-Hara was very cross with me about it. Anyhow, Tori said she was cross, though I should never have guessed it from her merry face. Thereafter I was provided with a *tobaco-bon*, a small wooden tray containing a tiny *hibachi* for lighting cigarettes at, and a small section of bamboo for the reception of stub-ends.

When bedtime came on the first night, I admit I was somewhat fearful of the provision that was to be made for me. I had heard about Japanese wooden pillows, and couldn't quite see myself sleeping comfortably on a miniature headsman's block. But it appeared that the wooden pillow—a little lacquered stand with a soft pad

on top which fits the neck—was the special perquisite of Japanese women-folk. The head does not come in contact with it at all, but projects beyond it, and thus the elaborate coiffure is not disarranged. When my bed was made up—a thick padded quilt laid upon the floor-mats, with a similar one as a covering—I found that the pillow provided for me was a small, hard, round bolster, balanced on the edge of the quilt. This, the usual Japanese man's pillow, was much better than the wooden neck-support, of course, but even so, it was a confounded nuisance. Do what I would, I could not keep it on the quilt. Time and again it slipped off the edge to the floor, letting my head down with a bump. I got the better of it finally, however, by jamming my suitcase at the back of it.

All the meals we consumed in the house were taken together—Tori, Hara, the old dame, George and myself—squatting round the *hibachi*, and they consisted for the most part of rice, brought in a small tub, and served, steaming hot, into each person's dish. With it we ate hard-boiled eggs, salted fish, pickles, beans, and frequently an omelette. And always tea—tea without sugar or milk. I may as well confess here that from time to time, when the craving for a good solid beef-steak became quite unsupportable, I, at first alone, but later accompanied by George, used to return to civilization and have a thoroughly satisfying meal at the Grand Hotel.

Whilst we were in the house George and I discarded our lounge suits and wore a couple of kimonos each, European trousers being totally unsuited for squatting about in, on floor-mats. On our feet we wore *tabi*, a kind of fleecy white sock reaching to the ankle and having a separate compartment for the big toe, and when we went out into the garden we slipped on a pair of wooden clogs held in position by a string which passed between the big and the second toe. They were not at all easy to keep on the feet, and the long, powerful stride which is one of George's outstanding characteristics was reduced to a pottering shuffle which made O-Tori-san double up with laughter. But I soon discovered that if I myself dared to

guffaw at "Shōsh", her blond giant, it was a different matter altogether, as her sudden seriousness and her flashing black eyes plainly showed. I must say she was a most charming little creature, and George's blind infatuation for her was quite understandable.

I assumed that she understood the temporary nature of the situation, but I never discussed her with George, nor did I ask any questions. He was perfectly well aware that in another fortnight's time we were due to sail for Shanghai on the Messageries Maritimes boat, and his conduct as well as his conscience were "pidgin belong him". My attitude was that of the Kamakura Buddha—one of serene detachment.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE BATH-HOUSE

EVERY day the three of us went somewhere together, shopping and shop-gazing in rickshas, with O-Tori-san gaily leading the way, or further afield by train or car.

We spent two whole days in Nikko, that fairyland of Japan, with its forests and streams and wondrous temple, and its ten-league avenue of towering cryptomeria trees; we visited Nara, the heart of old Japan, and saw its pagodas, its Shintō shrines, its stone lanterns and its gentle deer which wander about the road and beg from you, with great appealing eyes, the barley cakes which little country mousmees sell at stalls along the wayside.

One day we all went to Tokyo and looked in at a performance of *Hamlet*, done by Japanese players at the theatre near the Imperial Hotel. With a knowledge of the play, it was not difficult to follow in its Japanese form, although the very exaggerated gestures and the trailing walk of the actors, no less than their frightful grimaces, were something that Will Shakespeare never thought of.

After the theatre, we paid a visit to the world-famous Yoshiwara, the district devoted exclusively to the *yoro* or ladies of pleasure. The Yoshiwara lies on the eastern outskirts of Tokyo, some four miles from the centre of the city. Rickshas took us to the elaborate entrance gateway, but there we had to alight owing to the tremendous crush of people. It was for all the world like entering the grounds of a great exhibition. Running through the centre of the district was a very wide and handsome

avenue, lined on either side by great houses, many of them palatial in size and appearance. Short roads, also lined with houses, led off at right angles from the central avenue. So great was the press of people that it was difficult to make headway. Electric lamps sizzled blindingly at the top of tall standards; lights blazed and *samisens* tinkled from every window of the high and ornately ornamented houses; the crowd about us jostled and sang and laughed; and the silent stars looked down upon it all from a blue velvet sky.

Mankind in rut.

From a sightseer's point of view, of course, the "cages" are the dramatic feature. As we gradually forced our way closer to one of the great houses, I saw that the whole of the ground floor was in reality a show-window, but instead of plate-glass, long iron bars ran vertically from top to bottom. Within this cage, in front of an elaborate gilded screen, sat twenty or thirty girls clad in gorgeously embroidered kimonos, bound about the waist with the broad *obi*, or sash, tied with a great flat bow in front. Their little faces were impossibly white, their lips impossibly crimson, and a *chevaux de frise* of tortoise-shell pins, shaped like violin pegs, bristled above the helmets of their smooth black hair. Some chatted together, whilst others just sat and gazed indifferently at the crowd of men milling to and fro beyond the bars.

The Japanese do not accept the view of the Non-conformist conscience about pleasure-ladies. What we call a house of ill-fame is to them hardly more remarkable than a restaurant. The houses in the Yoshiwara are glorified tea-houses, and may be used solely as such. We entered one of them, and, passing into the garden, found ourselves in a veritable fairyland of swaying lanterns and tinkling streams and banks of magnificent chrysanthemums. Some of the blossoms were immense, like enormous smooth snowballs; some had long filaments stretched out like a star-fish; whilst others were like the tousled head of a Scotch terrier. On one bush there were, literally, hundreds of blossoms. Heine once told me that

as many as thirteen hundred and twenty flowers have been produced on one plant, at one time. Being November, the chrysanthemums were at their very best, of course, and our visit to this tea-house was thus well timed.

The underlying sex-motif of the house was never made apparent to us. We were received with the utmost courtesy, and, after admiring the flowers and partaking of tea, we bowed our adieus and took our departure amidst a veritable salvo of respectful hisses from the smiling little mousmees.

The *yoros'* profession is not a disgraceful one in Japan. In fact, no virtuous act is more extolled in Japanese fiction than that of a girl who sells herself to a house of ill-fame, for so many years, to relieve the poverty of her parents. In these days, however, any girl may free herself by a mere declaration to the police of her intention to do so. There is no extortion, no violence, and there are no bullies; there is a weekly medical inspection, and the whole district is under severe police control.

The Japanese method of dealing with this world-old problem, though running counter to our "shut-your-eyes" Anglo-Saxon ideas, at least preserves Tokyo's streets from the furtive and whispered solicitation that affronts the passer-by in our own cities.

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During the last week of our stay in Japan we made a trip to Miyanoshita, a famous holiday resort in a valley which has the sea below it at one end and Fuji-Yama towering above it at the other. Miyanoshita lies some thirty or forty miles from Yokohama, and we therefore decided to go by car.

The first part of the route led along the same road by which we had travelled to Kamakura, between the flooded mosaic of rice-fields, beneath the terraced hills and past the two-wheeled honey-pots that stank to high heaven. But soon we turned off to the right and skirted the coastline with, as lodestar, the vast snow-crowned

pyramid of Fuji-Yama ahead of us. This solitary cone with its perfect curves reigns over the whole life of the Japanese, being visible to nearly the whole of the country. It is one of the most sacred of all mountains, and is an object of pilgrimage for thousands of devotees during the summer months.

At Kōzu we left the coast and turned inland up the valley of the Hayakawa River—an exquisite gorge, brilliant with the autumn fires of the maple. Before reaching Miyanoshita, which stands at the head of the valley, we passed through two lovely villages with conical roofs of smooth thatch. The villagers make and sell the most tempting articles of mosaic inlaid work, and you simply cannot help buying the things—the workmanship is so beautiful and the prices so reasonable. Our footsteps were dogged in these villages by delightful little butterfly children in gay kimonos to whom I just naturally handed out bronze coins—of infinitesimal value—simply for the pleasure of making contact with the youngsters and watching them bow. I gave a couple of cash to one tiny little toddler who, with speckled scarlet-trimmed dress, beady black eyes, chubby and solemn wee face, and shaven head with top and side-knots, looked just like a doll from Liberty's. Without any change of expression she bowed low before me, so low indeed that she overbalanced completely and fell flat on her little stomach. But she scrambled up again, still solemn-faced, and once more made her obeisance, this time without disaster.

Not all Japanese children are attractive, of course; those of the poorest class not only have the dribbling noses which are universal, but many of them suffer from a nasty kind of skin affection which covers their shaven polls with scales. The middle and upper-class youngsters, however, are enchanting little creatures, gentle, courteous and respectful not only to their elders but to one another. Nothing could be more charming than the manner in which school-children greet each other at the school gate with a low bow.

Japan is a pleasant land for children, and the children,

by their courteous behaviour, make it a pleasant land for their elders. I remember Heine telling me, during one of our chats, that when the battledore and shuttlecock season opens at the time of the New Year, every street is filled with children playing the game. Not only so, but mother and father come and join them at it, and even old grandpa hobbles out and takes an odd swipe at the shuttlecock. The passing postman chips in too, and Heine said he once saw a policeman on point duty, after sticking it for as long as he could, fling up his hands in despair, grab a battledore, and plunge madly into a game along with a bunch of children and soldiers. I can quite believe it, because, in spite of their aping of Western mannerisms, they are still children at heart. With Lafcadio Hearn, I abominate the New Japan with its hurrying crowds of white-collared and trilby-hatted men, and its short-skirted girl tram-conductors. I infinitely prefer the drifting mists of Fuji-Yama to the smoke of factory chimneys. If Japan only knew what was good for it, it would behead its pompous silk-hatted officials, close its ports, and go back to its old gods and its old ways. The old Chinese law had a lot of sense in it: "Let him who says anything new, or him who shall invent anything new, be put to death." However . . .

Miyanoshita, apart from the scenery, consists of a magnificent hotel—the Fuji-ya—run on European lines with Japanese trimmings. No man need be lonesome for very long at the Fuji-ya unless he so desires, because, in the grounds of the hotel, he will find that every provision has been made for mitigating his solitary condition.

The whole of the surrounding district is honeycombed with evidences of volcanic activity, and after lunch we climbed into chairs slung on poles, and were carried, by thickset and knobby-muscled bearers, to Ōjigoku, or "Big Hell", at the top of the valley. The whole gorge reeked with sulphur fumes, and as we mounted higher the vegetation diminished until there was nothing to be seen but a bald and scabrous-looking surface.

I must be unduly sensitive or something, because,

although I was paying to be carried, I simply could not bear to go on lolling at my ease whilst my bearers panted and heaved beneath the weight of the chair-poles. So I got out and walked alone behind Tori's chair until George, shamed into a like act of mercy, joined me. Tori, who could in no way understand our action, tried to persuade George to get back into his chair, and when he blithely stepped off the narrow path to come abreast of her, her face went white and her black eyes widened with alarm. Rejoining me, he explained the reason. It seems that we were actually walking over a volcano, and the surface was merely a thin crust above a mass of boiling mud. If you step where the crust is too thin and consequently break through, you may only get your feet horribly burned. On the other hand, you might go clean through altogether and be swallowed overhead.

The view from the bald head of the gorge was indescribably lovely. Before us, sweeping upwards from the blue waters of Lake Hakone, was the superb cone of Fuji-Yama, twelve thousand feet high and tapering from a circumference of eighty miles at its base to but two and a half miles at its summit. The vision, in its sheer perfection of beauty, almost took the breath away.

"Big Hell", over which we had come, supplies the natural hot water, impregnated with sulphur and soda, which is led down through pipes to Miyanoshita and provides the health-giving baths at the hotel which are such a jolly feature.

On our return I took one of these hot baths, but, like the bashful fool I was, I offended a most charming little mousmee by declining to allow her to come in and scrub my back.

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But the volcanic marvels of Miyanoshita, the temples of Nikko and of Nara, the cormorant fishing at Gifu, and the shooting of the Hozu Rapids, have been described so often by abler pens than mine that I prefer to confine

myself to a relation of those peculiarly Japanese customs which, by reason of the position in which I found myself, I was able to observe.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the people is their passion for hot-water bathing, and, before the prurient influence of Western civilization moved the Powers That Be to issue an edict against it, the sexes bathed together in a state of complete nudity—and innocence. The nude in Japan was often seen, but never looked at.

Nowadays there are separate enclosures for men and for women, although in one public bath-house that I saw near Miyanoshta the dividing line consisted merely of a thin bamboo wand floating on the surface of the water.

Chamberlain says that there are over eleven hundred public baths in the city of Tokyo, and five hundred thousand people bathe in them every day. As a result a Japanese crowd, from an olfactory point of view, is the sweetest in the world.

Very few members of the B.M.A. would advise you to take a boiling hot bath and to sally forth immediately afterwards into the cold air, but this is precisely what hundreds of thousands of Japanese men and women do every day, with beneficial effects. Their baths contain water heated to a temperature of about 110° Fahrenheit, for they have proved to their own satisfaction that, though moderately hot water gives a chilly reaction, this is not the case when the water is extremely hot, nor is there any fear of catching cold.

On the last day but one of our sojourn in Yokohama, George, with a twinkle in his eye, invited me to accompany O-Tori-san and himself to a rather exclusive private bath-house, situated on the shores of Mississippi Bay, to which he had already paid several visits. He said the experience would do me good, but would not tell me in what way.

It was a cold, brisk day, with a sky of almost transparent clearness, and we rode in rickshas to the place, which lay at a distance of about a mile. Entering through high wooden doors which were opened to us by a bowed and

wrinkled old gatekeeper, whose sex to me was a matter of guesswork, we found ourselves in a very large garden beautifully laid out with a lake and wandering streams spanned by tiny arched bridges of crimson-painted wood, miniature stone *torii*—those temple gateways with two uprights and a crosspiece found all over Japan—tinkling cascades, and little stone lanterns. The garden was separated from the sea merely by a low stone embankment, and whilst the bath-house itself—a large wooden-sided building—occupied a position in the centre, there were also half a dozen small one-room houses scattered about it.

O-Tori-san clapped her little hands, and three mousmees hurried out to greet us. Bowing deeply, they led us to one of the little dolls' houses and ushered us inside. As usual, the sole furniture consisted of mats, two or three cushions and the ever-burning *hibachi*. Tori spoke for a moment or two to one of the mousmees, who thereupon pattered away on her little wooden clogs over the pebbly path, and returned shortly with three voluminous padded kimonos, three very small towels, and three pairs of wooden clogs (*geta*).

All three attendants then bowed and withdrew, and there was a long silence. George said :

"Well, I suppose we'd better get undressed."

"What?" I exclaimed. "Here? Now?"

"Certainly," replied George. "I won't look!"

"But," I said, "where is my bathing costume?"

"You are in Japan," said George.

"But——"

"No!"

"Oh!" I said.

It was easy enough for O-Tori-san, for she merely draped the quilted gown about her shoulders, turned her back, and disrobed beneath it. Besides, her costume itself made it a fairly simple matter, because a Japanese woman's clothing consists only of two little aprons, a vest, a pair of white socks, a kimono, or perhaps two in cold weather, and the *obi*, or sash, which is held up by means

of a sort of "improver" (*obi-age*) beneath, and a handsome string (*obi-dome*) to keep it in position above. Tori's kimonos, except on gala occasions, were not brightly patterned, but of silk with a small red design on a dark blue background, giving a shot purple effect.

Clad only in my voluminous wrapper, and carrying carefully in my hand the piece of soap which George had told me to bring, I slipped the string of the clogs between my toes, and shuffled inelegantly after Tori and George, who had already reached the central bath-house. Half way along the path one of my clogs came off, and by the time I had reached the building my companions were nowhere to be seen. Passing through the doorway, I entered a large room with nothing in it except, against the opposite wall, a line of shelves partitioned into small compartments, in two of which reposed the wraps of Tori and George, with their footgear beneath, neatly placed side by side. I hesitated for a moment, and then placing my kimono and clogs alongside theirs, and firmly clutching my piece of soap, I walked through into the adjoining room.

This I discovered to be a large and lofty chamber, lighted by latticed spaces high up under the overhanging eaves. Occupying the whole of the centre of the room appeared a handsome ornamental tower, made of felspar or quartz, and surrounding this, in the wooden floor, was a deep circular trench measuring about five feet down by three feet six inches across, and filled to within a foot of the top with almost boiling water. I also noticed that the wooden floor sloped gradually from all sides towards a gutter which encircled the trench, and the object of this was apparent to me when I perceived that George was kneeling down and having his back scrubbed by a Japanese bath-man. It is the cleanly custom of the people to wash and rinse themselves thoroughly before entering the bath itself, and the encircling gutter was obviously designed to carry away the soap and water used in this preliminary washing.

George, being cleansed, joined Tori in the trench, whilst I knelt down and submitted myself to the bathman's

ministrations. My own ablutions completed, it was my firm intention to ooze into the central moat without any delay at all, but, unfortunately for my modesty, this was not possible owing to the very high temperature of the water. It was a case of inch by inch, but, once in and the gasping over, it was delightful.

Small leaden pipes protruding from the central monolith dribbled streams of practically boiling water into the bath, and apertures in the sides took the overflow.

So far, we had had the bath-house entirely to ourselves, but before long two other Japanese women entered in a state of complete nudity and proceeded about their business. One of them, as her whitened face proclaimed, was a *geisha*, and I was curious to see whether her laundering operations would extend as far upwards as her features.

They did not, and her brown body, contrasted against her chalk-white neck and face, was rather startling.

I cannot stress too strongly the absolute decorum and seemliness which characterized the place and the bathers. So far as I could see, neither of the other occupants of the room even glanced in our direction. I am afraid that I myself was hardly so indifferent, for the *geisha*, after par-boiling herself for some time in the central trench, climbed out, and, clapping her hands, squatted down in a kneeling position in front of a small swinging mirror which the bath-man hurried to place upon the floor before her. Thereafter, for at least half an hour, she busied herself with her toilette. Using a boxful of face-creams and pigments, her little fingers fluttered to and fro adding a touch here, putting a tiny dab there, prinking and titivating, or patting into place a stray hair, and her tiny face, crowned with its great casque of smooth black hair twisted now up, now down, now aside, as she surveyed her features from every possible angle in the mirror.

She was still adding to her toilette those butterfly touches which, to a mere man, appear to possess neither cause nor effect, when Tori decided that we had had enough of bathing. The tiny towels were not much use, but the

thick wraps made up for them, and, shuffling across to our private doll's house, we dressed. Meanwhile, our three little mousmees had brought in small lacquered tables and laid upon them the first course of our meal.

It differed in no way from that first fateful meal taken with Heine in the tea-house, when George met O-Tori-san, except that by this time both of us had become almost professionally adept in the use of the chop-sticks. Now I come to think of it, however, there was one innovation—cuttle-fish—but so used had we become to strange and fearful kinds of food, that, without batting an eyelid, we swallowed the little beasts, trailing legs and all—and enjoyed them.

When the meal was ended we took a stroll round the garden before we left, and discovering, to our delighted surprise, a large and businesslike see-saw, George and I renewed our youth upon it.

The *Sphinx*, the 20,000-ton French mailboat on which we were to sail, had arrived in Yokohama two days previously, and, from the heights of the Bluff, her vast bulk could be seen lying alongside the wharf.

At 7.30 the next morning a little procession, composed of O-Tori-san, O-Hara-san, Mama-san (the old dame), George and myself, might have been observed climbing the sloping gangway which led perilously from the pier to an aperture high up in the towering black walls of the liner. Disappearing one by one into the bowels of the vessel, the procession, still in single file, pattered and clattered down endless corridors until it reached cabin number thirty-three.

I had purchased three small gifts for the women-folk, and, when making my presentations the night before, had been overwhelmed with embarrassment at the length, the depth and the duration of the bowing that ensued. Now, it seemed, it was my turn to be the recipient of gifts.

Mama-san produced, like a conjurer, from her voluminous sleeve, a little parcel wrapped carefully in tissue-paper, which, upon being opened, revealed a lovely little blue china ricebowl, an antique and exquisite piece of work. I bowed low and exclaimed, "*Arigatō*"—"thank you"). She bowed lower still and replied, "*Do itashimashite*"—which means, "Don't mention it." Having now come to an end of my linguistic knowledge I simply went on bowing to the old lady, who grinned at me in a motherly manner with a row of betel-blackened teeth. Little O-Hara then stepped forward and presented me with a tiny swinging-mirror, a perfect reproduction in miniature, complete with tiny drawers and microscopic handles, of the mirrors which reflect practically every face in Japan. It was a wonderful example of the exquisitely minute workmanship in which the Japanese excel. For instance, the tiny drawers fitted so perfectly that when you closed them you pushed against a cushion of air which was expelled with a little sigh.

More *Arigatōs*; more bowing.

Tori's gift to me consisted of a tiny lacquered chest of drawers, standing about nine inches high—another miracle of Japanese craftsmanship.

More *Arigatōs*; more *Do itashimashites*; more bowing.

Meanwhile, presentations were being made to George also, with the same ceremonial, and consequently in that small cabin there were never less than four people bowing deeply at the same time. Once the French steward opened the door, but when he caught sight of the bobbing occupants, he himself bowed and withdrew.

But at last the warning boom of the siren and the clanging of gongs brought the ceremony to an end, and the little procession, with Tori and George bringing up the rear after a short interval, once more pattered down the corridors, and so to the gangway.

Here, before the astonished eyes of the passengers, low bows were again exchanged.

Sayōnara, Mama-sān, *Sayōnara*, O-Hara-san, and
Sayōnara ōki-ni o sewa ni narimashita, O-Tori-san.

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Three little figures waving on the quay.

Three tiny figures still waving, but dwindling . . .
dwindling . . . dwindling.

Sayōnara, O-Tori-san, *Sayōnara*.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

KOBE AND THE INLAND SEA

I ADMIT that eight a.m. was an ungodly hour at which to sail. I was also willing to make allowance for the rending pangs of parting from which poor George was undoubtedly suffering. But even so, he need not have been in quite such a vile temper. I could do nothing with him at first, but, knowing him as well as I did, I felt confident that, in the course of the next day or two, the yearning and calflike look would pass from his eyes, and that, as if emerging from a long dark tunnel, he would begin to perk up and thereafter become again his old cheery self.

But, meanwhile, he was very low indeed—so low, in fact, that when at last he succumbed to my persuasions, and, sighing like a bellows, suffered himself to be led down to the saloon to have a belated breakfast, he ordered only two extra sausages with his bacon. George's appetite is an infallible indication of his mental state.

Personally, I must confess that, although I did my best to conceal the fact from my grieving friend, I thrilled to the steady trampling of the engines, to the steady pressure of the cold, clean air, and above all, to the heart-uplifting realization that we were free of "all that", and making a completely new start. All cluttered up! But now—*free!* Good!

It is one of the most satisfying things about travel, this opening of a new book at the commencement of each fresh section of the journey. Whatever you may have

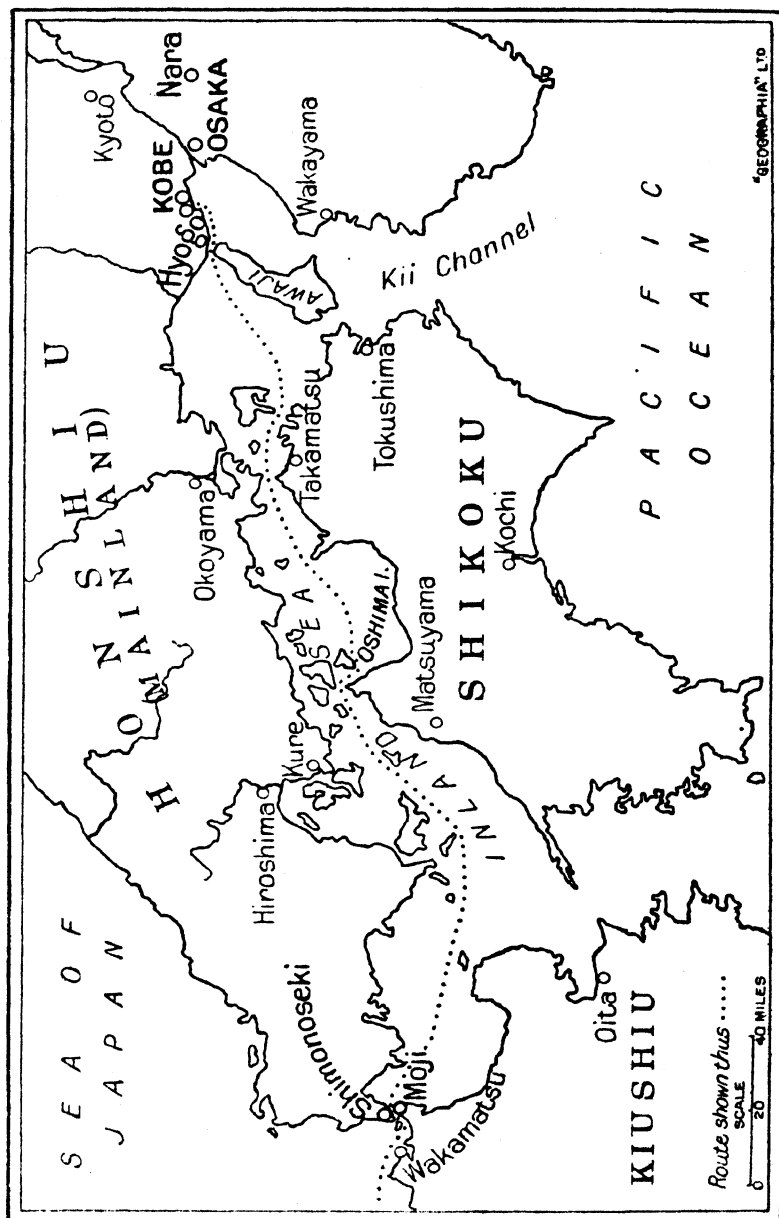
cause to regret in regard to the earlier portion of your travels—whether of omission or commission, abstention or indulgence—you may commence all afresh when the engine-room telegraph clangs the signal, “Full ahead!” And I was so struck during the morning with the brilliance of this great thought that I went down to the cabin and woke George up to tell him. But somehow it failed to register with him, and after a regrettable exchange of personalities, I left him to resume his clodlike slumbers.

The *Sphinx* was a fine vessel with very handsome public rooms, which, however, were rather wasted on a passenger list of forty-six souls. I looked hopefully into the music-room, a lofty pillared hall adorned with a stained-glass dome and beautiful paintings, but its vast emptiness was so chilling that I closed the door with a shiver and sought the more homely comforts of the smoke-room.

At lunch-time, George still being asleep, I found myself sitting at table with an American, whom I propose to call Elias B. Howard to prevent an action for libel. He very soon opened the conversation, and within a few moments I learned that Elias B. was a Commodore of a famous American Yacht Club and Vice-President of a world-renowned meat-packing house in Chicago, that Japan was hopelessly effete, but that the U.S.A. was God’s Own Country and that Elias B. Howard was, as one might say, practically managing it for Him.

Elias B. had been an interested observer that morning of the little procession, and of the subsequent leave-taking at the gangway, and he was full of leading, not to say impertinent, questions. Americans of his type have no reticences of their own, nor any respect for those of others. But he was not a bad sort on the whole—indeed, as things turned out, he was very kind to us, though even this perhaps was due more to his need for an audience than to anything else.

It will be seen from the map that when we were at Nara, which trip we made by train from Yokohama, we



were actually within a short distance of Kobe. But we did not realize this at the time, because the excursion was made lightheartedly and without reference to an atlas. Not that it mattered, for, although we were now bound for Kobe by sea, the boat was due to stay there only for about twelve hours.

George resurrected himself for the evening meal and appeared at the dinner-table. Meanwhile, Elias B. must have been looking up the passenger list, because his first remark to George was :

"Good evening! I see you've got the word "Hon." in front of your name. What does that stand for?"

"'Go Hon!'", replied George at a venture, "the 'go' being silent, as in—er—'goloshes'."

But he must have made other enquiries because, later on in the evening, he came all over matey with George, and kept patting him on the shoulder. George stood it as long as he could, and then coming over all hands-across-the-sea himself, he patted him a clout in return that nearly broke the meat-merchant's neck.

Howard was a queer mixture. He was very old-maidish and precise in his ways, and although he must have had plenty of money, he lacked a sense of proportion, being mean in small things and extravagant in large ones. For instance, when we reached Shanghai he engaged a very expensive room and yet grudged himself a glass of beer at meal-times. He was a bachelor of about fifty years of age, wore pince-nez, was of medium height and sported a large moustache, dyed black, and a black toupé parted in the middle. His face rather gave one the impression of a mask, for when he spoke his lips moved hardly at all, and when he turned his head sideways, his whole torso swivelled sideways also. His language, too, was rather distasteful. Nobody minds a few spirited damns, and when it comes to really heartfelt cursing and blistering invective, I flatter myself that I am no mean linguist, but there is a very wide difference between this and the interlarding of one's whole conversation with blasphemy and filth,

which is what Howard did—and, indeed, most of the other Americans we met on our travels.

On the other hand, however, there was no doubt that Howard was really quite a big man in his way, as we were to learn when we arrived in Shanghai.

We reached Kobe at nine o'clock the next morning, and anchored out in the bay. Kobe lies at the foot of a range of lofty hills some two thousand to three thousand feet in height, and occupies a position at the western extremity of Osaka Bay. Osaka itself, that busy city with its wonderful canals and bridges and gay floating tea-houses, lies about twenty miles to the east across the waters of the crescent bay.

We went ashore with Howard, at about eleven o'clock, in a launch, and, falling in with his suggestion, took rickshas from the wharf to the Tor Hotel, standing white and cool-looking on the slope of the hill behind the town. Here again, as at Miyanoshita, succumbing to my accursed kindness of heart, I got out and toiled on foot up the steep hill, whilst Howard jibed at me and, out of pure devilment, urged on his sweating ricksha-boy with the ferrule of his umbrella.

To fill up the interval before lunch, we walked from the hotel to the Nunobiki Waterfalls—two cascades of forty and eighty feet respectively, which, one above the other, tumbled down cliffs of grey limestone rock set within a frame of autumn-tinted woods. The place is a favourite rendezvous of merry-makers, and the tea-houses which are clustered about the falls have a certain reputation for rowdiness. They seemed quiet enough at that time of the morning, however, though in one of them was a party of Japanese men and *geisha* who displayed every symptom of making considerable whoopee in the near future.

The lunch at the Tor Hotel, as the twenty-two enumerated items on the appended menu will bear witness, was a very good one.

HALF THE SEAS OVER

THE TOR HOTEL, LTD., KOBE.

TIFFIN

(served from 12.30—2 p.m.)

HORS D'OEUVRES.

1. Oysters on Horseback.

SOUP.

2. Portuge Portugaise.

FISH.

3. Grilled Makerelles—Sauce Pipante.

ENTREES.

4. Spinaches et Fried Eggs in Cocottes.
 5. Smocked Sausages et Mashed Cabbages.
 6. Chicked Saute Bourgeoise.
 7. Shrimped Curry and Rice.

COLD MEATS.

8. Mixed Cold Meats with Jellie.

SALADES.

9. Lettue. 10. Italienne.

VEGETABLES.

11. French Beans Maitre d'Hotel. 12. Onions in Cream.
 13. Braised Leaks. 14. Boiled Potatoes

ROAST OR GRILL.

15. Gailled Entrecots Suedois and Fried Potatoes.

ENTREMETS.

16. Semouline Fritters—Strawberries Sauce.
 17. California Orange Salade.

DESSERTS.

18. Fruit in Saison. 19. Walnuts.
 20. American Cheese. 21. Guyere Cheese.
 22. Brick Cheese.
 Coffee.

Honourable gentlemen are kindly requested not to
 smoke in Dinings-room before 1.30 p.m.

George said that the "smocked sausages" were delicious, and we all enjoyed the "braised leaks".

After lunch we took rickshas to Hyogo, a large town on the southwest of Kobe, and so close that it really merges into it—the link between the two being the bridge over the

river Minatogawa. Guided by Howard, who kept referring to his handbook, we visited the Shintō temple of Nankō, dedicated to the memory of the famous warrior Kusunoki Masashige, who, in the fourteenth century, fought a tremendous battle here, and, being heavily outnumbered, committed *hara-kiri* rather than surrender.

In commemoration of this ancient event, the river has been deflected from its original course, and the exposed bed of it, where the battle was fought, has been laid out as a promenade lined with tall pine trees. Another portion of the river-bed forms one of Kobe's chief pleasure resorts, and is packed with cinemas, beer-halls, tea-houses *et hoc genus omne*. The Japanese, heedless of theology and harassed by no conviction of original sin, lightly turns to thoughts of *geisha* and of love whilst he is at a religious festival. For this and other reasons, one nearly always finds restaurant tea-houses and houses of pleasure close to a temple. On the hill behind, approached by a long flight of white steps and seated below a marble canopy, Elias B., in his capacity of showman, pointed out to us a rather fine statue of Prince Itō, the famous Japanese statesman who was murdered by a Korean fanatic at Harbin in 1909.

Hounded to it by our indefatigable friend, we hopped into rickshas and tooled along to another Shintō temple, that of Ikuta, said to have been founded by the almost legendary Empress Jingō who, aided by "fishes both great and small, and by a miraculous wave", crossed over to Korea in the third century, and subjugated it. According to Howard's guide-book, the Empress Jingō seems to have been a very notable woman. She smote her enemies hip and thigh, lived to be a hundred years old, and, during the whole of her three years' absence in Korea, held within her womb her son Ōjin, who is now worshipped as Hachiman, the God of War. The famous Empress also added great areas of conquered territories to her kingdom, and, as George remarked, taking one thing with another, her motto undoubtedly should have been : "What I have, I hold" !

Howard carried with him, in addition to his guide-book, a very elaborate camera. Unlike mine, which was an ordinary folding Kodak taking a three by five-and-a-half inch picture, his camera was a complicated affair which took stereoscopic views—duplicate photos side by side. Now Elias B. fancied himself a good deal at photography, and was at first inclined to regard my amateur efforts with an amused tolerance which was as galling as it was unjustified. I admit that I understand practically nothing of the alchemy of photography, and that the precise chemical composition of the sensitized film is to me a closed book—a book, moreover, which I have no desire to explore. But I do happen to possess a natural eye for pictorial composition. This fact, in conjunction with a considerable amount of sheer good luck, resulted in a high percentage of really good pictures, which riled Howard almost beyond bearing. It was a source of constant exasperation and complaint to Elias B., who, every time he took a picture, focused with meticulous accuracy, twiddled and adjusted umpteen knobs, stepped forward, stepped backward, squinted earnestly through his view-finder—and very often found, when the film was developed, that the picture was either all foreground, or that a large portion of it was obliterated by his own thumb.

He said it was not fair. His camera cost ten times what mine did, he knew the history of photography from the time of M. Daguerre to the present day, he knew what happened in the dark room—at this George looked doubtful—and here was I, with what practically amounted to a pinhole camera, obtaining results which, although obviously pure flukes every one of them, were better than his. But I am anticipating a little, for, of course, this sore point arose only when the films we exposed that first day were developed by the ship's barber.

Meanwhile, I snapped casually here and there, whilst Elias B. Howard fiddled and focused until he became the centre of a jostling crowd of children, who had to be shooed out of the way by George and myself before he could press the trigger. After every three exposures he

had to insert a new film, and I managed to take an excellent picture of him in his black bowler hat—which he always wore resting upon his ears—bending low over his complicated mechanism in the midst of a milling crowd of Japanese children, ranging in age from three summers to seventy winters.

In the precincts of the Temple of Nōfukuji at Hyogo is a *Daibutsu* which, although a bronze Buddha of almost the same colossal dimensions as the one at Kamakura, is, however, not nearly so impressive. Erected in 1891 by a local paper manufacturer, it lacks the majesty and the calm of the older one, and its flat and barren surroundings also compare unfavourably with the hills and woods of Kamakura.

On our way back to the wharf we passed a school where the children were having a singing-class in the open air, and, of all the tunes in the world, they were blithely carolling “Auld Lang Syne”. It sounds unlikely, but it happens to be the truth. The tune was quite unmistakable, though I would not swear that the words were those of the Scottish National Anthem.

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We sailed the same evening at seven o'clock, and an hour later passed through Akashi Strait into the great Inland Sea of Japan.

The Inland Sea is about 240 miles along, and varies in width from eight to forty miles. It also varies in character, in some places consisting of a great open sheet of water, and in others of an archipelago of clustering islands and rocks and shoals, through which the passage narrows to a few hundred yards. It not only affords the most direct route from Kobe to Nagasaki and to Shanghai, but it also offers a smooth water passage in contrast to the uncertain weather and perilous chances of the open sea. Even as I write these words comes news in the morning paper of a devastating typhoon which has swept the Pacific coast of Japan, destroying communications, plunging Tokyo into darkness, causing a death-dealing landslide in

Yokohama, and completely destroying a village of eight hundred houses about thirty miles west of Miyanoshita.

I rather wished at first that we had begun our voyage in the daylight, but, as the hours passed, I changed my mind. On every side, in the darkness, loomed masses of land; on our left, constantly, the hundred-and-fifty-mile-long Island of Shikoku, with the stars twinkling above its four-thousand-foot peaks, and in front and around us islets of every conceivable size and shape, from mere rocks to islands of considerable size. I went up forrard, and, leaning over the bow, watched the sharp stem as it parted the ink-black waters, turning them aside into spreading white furrows that gleamed with ghostly phosphorescence. The glass-calm sea mirrored the glittering stars, and it was as if we were ploughing steadily forward through an endless sheet of black glass, splintering the constellations into a myriad dancing sparks.

Now and then a junk or a small fishing-boat arose suddenly out of the night, drifted like a black ghost across our bows, and faded behind us into the shadows. Once we passed through a fleet of fishing-boats, lying motionless with idle sails, amidst the drowned stars.

Sometimes, passing close inshore, the twinkling lights of towns and villages cast wavering ribbons of gold upon the quiet waters, and ever and anon the wheeling spear of a lighthouse swept across the darkness. Not a sound was to be heard save the liquid tinkling of the bow-wave below me, and the clang-clang of the ship's bell as it marked the passing hours. Behind me uprose the vast superstructure of the vessel, towering ghostly white against the stars. Somewhere behind its steel frontage was George, probably flat on his back and snoring loudly, and Elias B. Howard, with his masklike face, combing his toupé for the morrow's morn.

At midnight we entered a narrow passage which led, apparently, into a complete cul-de-sac. Island masses loomed up in front and on every side, and peer as one might, there seemed to be no outlet at all. Gone, too, was the placid sea, for here the current raced and pressed against

the hull of the vessel, twisting her so that even her vast bulk heeled and shuddered as the engines doggedly drove her forward. But, swinging now to port and now to starboard, she snaked her way cleverly past the menacing islands, emerging safely at last into the comparatively open waters of the Bingo Nada, the second of the five lake-like spaces into which the Japanese mariners divide the Inland Sea.

There being now no likelihood of any more excitement for a few hours, I decided to go to bed, but, in spite of George's sleepy protests, I was called very early next morning to watch our passage through the difficult narrows between the Islands of Oshima and Shikoku. Revealed by the level rays of the newly risen sun, junks and fishing-boats everywhere dotted the pearl-tinted sea. Grotesque islands of every imaginable shape and size surrounded us, carved and crannied and bitten by the erosion of swift currents, and crowned with fantastic pine trees. Many of the smaller ones were just solid masses of rock, worn away by the tides until they overhung on all sides like a toadstool on a submerged stalk. But perched on even the smallest of them was at least one pine tree, upthrusting from some crevice into which it had forced its roots. Other islands, a thousand feet in height, were great pyramids of green, terraced with rice and barley patches to their topmost summits, and with villages strung along their shores.

As we approached the invisible passage between the two islands, our bows were aimed directly at the tall cliffs of Shikoku, whilst Oshima closed in upon us on the starboard side. Nearer and nearer we approached, still heading straight for the cliffs, nearer and still more near, until I thought all was surely lost. But at the very last moment, when it seemed as if nothing could prevent our crashing into the wall of rocks ahead, the helm was suddenly put hard over, skidding our stern to port and swinging the bows round from a south-westerly course to one pointing due north, and behold!—a narrow cleft between the two islands was revealed. Through these narrows the current was tearing at a tremendous rate, and great

whirlpools, like funnels, ten feet in depth from rim to centre and as many feet across, rotated and spun past us on both sides, so that in spite of the full power of the engines we could hardly make headway.

Fighting every foot of the way, with the racing tide swinging our bows to right and left and the vortices swirling and clutching along our towering sides, the *Sphinx* battled forward, her every bolt and rivet trembling and vibrating under the strain. The narrowest part was only a hundred yards across, and there were villages within biscuit toss on either side—so near that I could see into the houses. A smaller and less powerful vessel than ours would probably have had to wait until the tide had slackened, for cases have occurred where a boat steaming at even ten knots has been turned completely round and swept out of the narrows like a fledgling sparrow from a rainspout.

But our captain kept the *Sphinx* stubbornly to her task, and little by little we won forward until the passage widened, the current slackened, and after another two miles we were able to swing towards the west. Here again, however, we appeared to be completely landlocked, the mountainous islands of Oshima behind, Omi on the right, Shikoku on the left, and Osaki dead ahead, closing in the prospect on every side. But, after rounding the dazzling white outlying rocks which marked the northern extremity of Shikoku, the view opened out once more, and, swinging south-west, we entered the more spacious waters of Mishima Nada, the third of the five maritime divisions. Thereafter we steamed through channels and lakes, between rocks and wooded islands, amidst seascapes of bewitching beauty.

White-winged junks skimmed over the blue waters, islands glided past us with temples peeping through the trees far up their wooded slopes, and away to the north the lofty hills of the mainland hung like a blue cloud. On our left, close at hand all the while, the green flanks of the mountains on Shikoku led the eye upwards to peaks tipped with snow.



“ . . . another Shinto temple—that of Ikuta.”

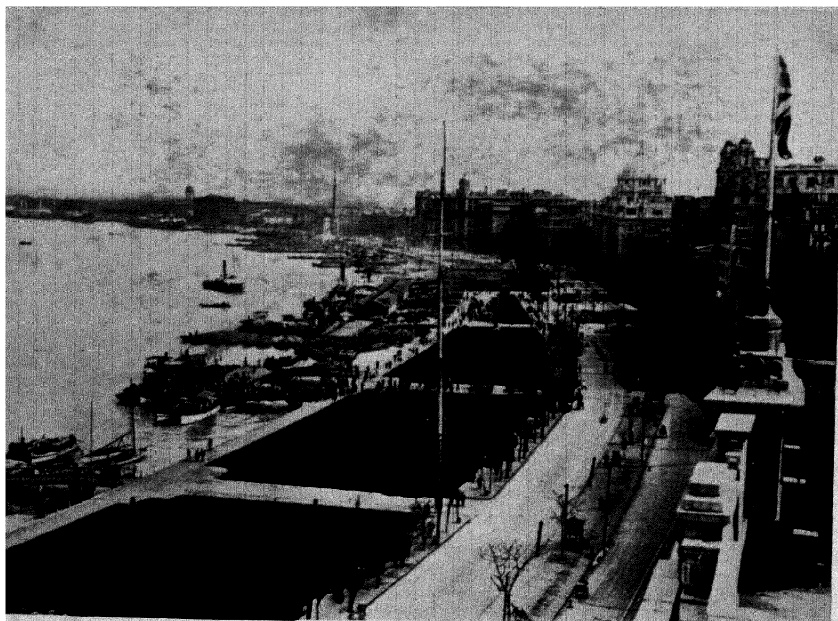
(see page 185)



KOBE

“ . . . he had to insert a new film.”

(see page 187)



SHANGHAI.

"Shanghai is a city with two souls. . . ."

(see page 195)



SOO-CHOW.

"... the massive, castellated wall. . . ."

At about breakfast-time we threaded our way through another narrow channel, and so emerged into the Iyo Nada, the fourth of the sections, and one that presented a large expanse of comparatively open water. And I was just going down to breakfast when, looking overside, I saw that we were passing through a sea swarming with jellyfish. I have never seen so many in my life. There were literally billions and billions of these pale blue transparencies floating just below the surface, and massed so thickly that it was like forcing a passage through a sea of semi-liquid starch. We ploughed through this glutinous mass for a long time before it began to thin out and the jellyfish to appear as isolated discs glimmering palely through the blue water, and it was quite late when I went below to the breakfast-table, where George and Howard were already seated, immersed in bacon and eggs and a fierce argument about who won the War. This cause of friendly bickering continued off and on during the whole time we travelled together, George using it as a *matador* wields his red cloak—as a definite irritant or just as a distraction.

During the greater part of the day we steamed almost due westward through the Suwo Nada, the fifth and final section of the Inland Sea—an open stretch of water unrelieved by any rocks or islets, but with the great island Kyushu plainly visible on the port side.

In the late afternoon, as we approached the Straits of Shimo-no-seki, which are the means of exit from the Inland Sea into the open ocean beyond, the land on both sides began to draw together in front of us. Lights were beginning to twinkle from the shore and from numerous buoys in the fairway as we drew abreast of Moji, the great coal-ing station, and threaded our way through the shallows and the sandbanks past the town which bears the same name as the Straits. The channel varies in width from one to four miles, but is narrowed very much more by shoals and banks of sand. It is well marked and lighted, however, and the *Sphinx* swept along between the flat shores with no diminution of speed—first south, then west, then due

north, taking, because of her great tonnage and draught, the deepest and most northern of the three passages.

A strong tide was running against us—the slightest deviation would have meant drift and disaster—and in the darkness it needed little imagination to visualize the writhing currents as an evil thing, plucking and clutching along the sides and seeking hungrily to obtain fingerhold on the smooth steel plates in order to twist the great vessel bodily from her course.

Almost exactly twenty-four hours after leaving Kobe we were safely through the Straits, had said good-bye to Japan, and the *Sphinx*, settling down into her stride, was lifting grandly to the long rollers of the open sea.

Thirty-six hours later—to be precise, at eight a.m.—we had crossed the Yellow Sea and were well within the mouth of the Yangtse Kiang River, whose muddy waters streamed and swirled past us in their race towards the ocean.



CHAPTER TWENTY

SHANGHAI AND SOO-CHOW

FOR many miles off the coast the blue waters of the sea had been stained and sullied by the vast outflow of the Yangtse River, which is almost exactly the same length as the Congo, and carries along with it so great an amount of silt that it has built up, in the estuary, an island thirty-two miles long and ten miles wide.

Its broad and swiftly flowing waters were crowded with junks of every size and shape, from ocean-going vessels with high prow and stern, and with square sails of nut-brown matting hoisted on masts with divergent rakes, to small, roofed-in sampans and fussy steam launches. The banks of the river were low-lying, and, being far distant, showed little of interest, but at about half past eight we swung up the Whang-poo branch of the stream, and at eleven o'clock were off the wharf of the South Manchurian Railway at Shanghai itself.

Whilst the great vessel was being brought alongside—a task rendered difficult by the strong current—George and I amused ourselves by watching the life of the river. Anchored out in the stream was a huge three-masted junk, whose square-ended and towering stern was elaborately carved and brightly painted in the form of a bird with outstretched wings standing on a rock, whilst on each side of the up-sweeping prow appeared a great staring eye—on the principle of “No can see, how can walkee stlaight?” The sides of the vessel were painted a brilliant

crimson, from the top of each knock-kneed mast floated a long pennant, and its decks were crowded with Chinese passengers and with rows of suspended laundry.

But even more amazing in the way of craft were a number of perfectly round wooden tubs, in which were riding whole families of beggars who, in spite of the swift current, manipulated their circular shallops by the aid of short paddles and managed to hold them abreast of us. In one tub there appeared to be a whole family—father, mother, two children—and a duck which, held on a length of cord, swam about quacking loudly, and, as it seemed, appealingly, to us. Unfortunately we had, as yet, no Chinese money and could therefore only make friendly international gestures to the bird. Becoming tired of this, it paddled to the edge of the tub, flapped its wings, quacked more stridently than ever, and was lifted aboard by one of the children, whereupon it sat on her knee and preened its feathers contentedly enough.

A great shouting at the other side of the ship made us cross the deck in a hurry just in time to witness a tragedy. The stern of the *Sphinx* was already moored close to the wharf down river, and her bow was being hauled in slowly by means of steel hawsers. The current, piling up against her inner side, was making of this a slow business, but suddenly the resistance being overcome, the river, pressing now against the outer side, pushed the bows swiftly towards the wharf—too swiftly for three sampans, which, in spite of warnings, had delayed too long in getting clear.

There was nothing to be done—one could only watch and wait for the event.

Inexorably the towering steel wall advanced towards the trapped boats, reached them, and with a long, crackling crunch that seemed endless, squashed them and their screaming occupants against the massive pillars of the high wharf. There was a tremendous bump, and, as the liner eased away again, all that could be seen down there in the little strip of water were a few pieces of wood and

some shapeless bundles slowly sinking through a red mist.

We were still gazing horrified over the side when Elias B. Howard, his face parted in an unwonted grin, approached us, leading three spectacled Chinese gentlemen very smartly dressed in Raglan overcoats and trilby hats, and carrying gold-mounted walking-sticks in their yellow-gloved hands. He introduced them to us as Mr. Chak, Mr. Sugase, and Mr. Nishido, though which was which I never succeeded in remembering. All three bowed and hissed respectfully.

Mr. Howard then explained that Baron Furukiri, of Tokyo, head of the great Japanese banking house with whom Howard's Meat-Packing Co. did a considerable proportion of their Eastern business, had given instructions to his branches in China that Mr. Howard should be met at every port by his bank's representatives and that all arrangements should be made by them for Mr. Howard's comfort and entertainment. "These gentlemen," concluded Howard, "have a car waiting on the wharf, and I shall be very glad if you will both join the party."

It was, of course, very decent indeed of Howard, and both George and I felt that he was heaping coals of fire upon our heads after we had been pulling his leg so unmercifully. Since he really seemed to wish it, however, we accepted his invitation, and, descending the gangway, walked for the first time on Chinese soil. It was rather a squash in the car, but it was a seven-seater Packard and we managed quite well as far as the Astor House Hotel.

Shanghai is a city with two souls: a city where, at hotels like the Astor House, you can live in all the comfort of the West and yet have all the colour and sound and mystery of the East just round the corner; a city with telephones—and fire-crackers at funerals; a city with electric light—and where they pinch themselves black and blue to cure a cold; a city with trams—and silver collars round the children's necks to fool the evil spirits into thinking them dogs.

The British settlement lies to the north of the native city, and is built on what used to be a marshy swamp. This has been drained, of course, but the ground being still rather soft and spongy, no very high or heavy buildings can be built upon it.

Howard had already booked accommodation for himself by letter at the Astor House Hotel, but we had no difficulty in securing a double room also, although the price was rather fierce—M\$ 20 per day, about £5-0-0, for the two of us. The Mexican dollar is rather a massive piece of money to carry around. It is a handsome silver coin the size of a five-shilling piece, and stamped on the back with bold Chinese characters in red and black paint, without which mark none is accounted genuine weight. Chinese currency consists of the "cash", a small copper coin about the size of a halfpenny but only one third as thick, with a square hole in the centre for convenience in stringing. It has a raised rim round the circumference as well as round the hole in the centre, and Chinese characters occupy the space between the two. But when receiving change you are handed all kinds of coins—Hong-Kong dollars, Japanese yen, five-ten-and twenty-cent pieces from the Straits Settlements—so that it is very difficult to keep track of one's actual outgoings and incomings. However, Mr. Chak—or was it Mr. Nishido?—hissed at and handled our monetary transactions, and, being a banker, no doubt he knew what he was up to.

In the afternoon we went for a drive round and about Shanghai—to the English Club and the racecourse, past the great houses of Chinese merchants, built of brick with stucco-work ornamentation, through busy streets with trams clanging down the centre, and at a snail's pace through narrow alleys crammed with natives. Now and again, in streets bordering upon the Chinese quarter, we encountered more than one coolie trundling trousered women along on a wheel-barrow, a contraption with a large wooden wheel about 3 ft. 6 in. in diameter in the centre, supporting, by means of a framework over its

top half, a shelf on each side of it, like the seats on an Irish jaunting-car.

We kept for the most part to the European section, but even so, one saw enough of the native life to realize the vast difference between the Japanese and the Chinese people. Japan, so gay and quaint—kimonos, tea-houses, flowers, and joyous festivals—and China so drab and poverty-stricken and dirty. The coolie class wear a nondescript coat and trousers of cotton for summer wear, and a padded suit of the same material for winter. The women wear practically the same.

Another thing that immediately impresses one is the swarm of human beings. There are still vast areas of China, fertile regions too, which are almost without population, but, transport in the interior being difficult, the people have concentrated near the coasts, where rivers and canals solve that problem for them. And in these regions millions and millions of Chinese are congregated. Nishido said—or maybe it was Chak—that so dense is the population in the more favoured sections, that thousands of families on the Upper Yangtse have terraced the hills and mountains to the height of eight thousand feet in an attempt to find room for their homes. We ourselves saw in Shanghai, and later even more clearly in Canton, the tens of thousands of Chinese who, crowded off the land, spend their entire lives in boats on the rivers and canals.

That night we were taken by our three Oriental factotums to dine in state at the Ping Shang Restaurant in Thibet Road. Being specially honoured, we were accommodated in a private room which, however, instead of being furnished in Chinese fashion, presented the appearance of a bed-sitting-room in a Euston Road hotel. A dining-table, laid with glass and cutlery in European style, occupied the centre of the room, with leather-upholstered chairs drawn up to it, and a marble-topped dressing-table, with a swing mirror, did duty as a sideboard.

But if the surroundings were disappointing, the meal was Chinese enough, as the menu which follows bears witness :

THE PING SHANG HOTEL

Chinese Entertainment

MENU.

Birds' Nest and Pigeon Egg Soup.
Creamed Shark Fins.
Fried Rolled Chicken in Rice.
Baked Mandarin Fish.
Broiled Snipes.
Stewed Turtle.
Special Rolled Paste.
White Fungus.
Roasted Duck in Pancakes.
Rice.
Almond Tea.

Birds' nest soup is a luxury—as much a luxury as is real turtle soup in England. The nests that are used are those of a species of swallow, and, unlike an ordinary nest of twigs and hay and grass, are of a gelatinous substance produced by the bird itself—a kind of saliva. The soup is white and soft and rather slippery, and has an insipid taste; and if anyone is interested, here is the recipe for making it :

Take clean white birds' nests and soak thoroughly. Pick out all feathers. Boil in soup or water till tender, and of the colour of jadestone. Place pigeons' eggs below, and add some ham shreds on top. Boil again slowly with little fluid. If required sweet, then boil in clear water till tender, add sugar-candy, then eat.

The sharks' fin which figures so prominently on Chinese menus is, to be exact, neither shark nor fin, but bits of swordfish—pieces taken from underneath the fins and scraped and moulded by hand to look like a complete fin. Most of it is imported from Nova Scotia. It has a rather "clean" taste about it, something like grape-fruit.

I think the "white fungus" was a species of Mongolian mushroom. I remember hoping so at the time.

The "Roasted Duck in Pancakes" consisted of small pieces of chopped-up duck, wrapped in browned batter

—delicious—and this, in accordance with the instructions of our Celestial mentors, we ate with our fingers.

The “Almond Tea”—probably made from peach or apricot kernels, because the almond is not a product of China at all—was, so Mr. Sugase—or Chak—informed us, “good for the belch”.

About half way through the dinner the door opened to admit a procession of Chinese Singing-Girls, twelve of them, who took up positions one on either side of each of us, immediately behind our shoulders. They were all very young—from fourteen to sixteen years of age I should say—very small, and clad in black silk jackets reaching to the knee, with black silk trousers split at the ankle into two fore and aft flaps, whilst their tiny bound feet were encased in silk slippers not more than four inches long. Every one of them wore their jet-black hair combed and gummed down closely to the head, with, in front, a fringe coming almost down to the eyebrows, and, at the back, a clubbed arrangement that looked like a shiny black pan-handle. Their faces were heavily powdered, their eyebrows accentuated, their lips were painted a brilliant crimson, and all were wearing long jade ear-rings together with gold necklaces and many bracelets.

It was rather embarrassing to have one of these black-garbed houris standing so closely on each side behind one's back. Owing to my total ignorance of the Chinese language, all I could do was to keep turning first to the right and then to the left and smiling into their jet-black eyes. Elias B., owing to his seemingly atrophied neck muscles, kept swinging his whole body from side to side, and this so tickled the girls that, much to Howard's astonishment, they all went off into peals of laughter. Imitating the actions of our preceptors, from time to time I handed a tit-bit backwards on the point of my fork, and the favoured one picked it off and transferred it to her mouth with her fingers.

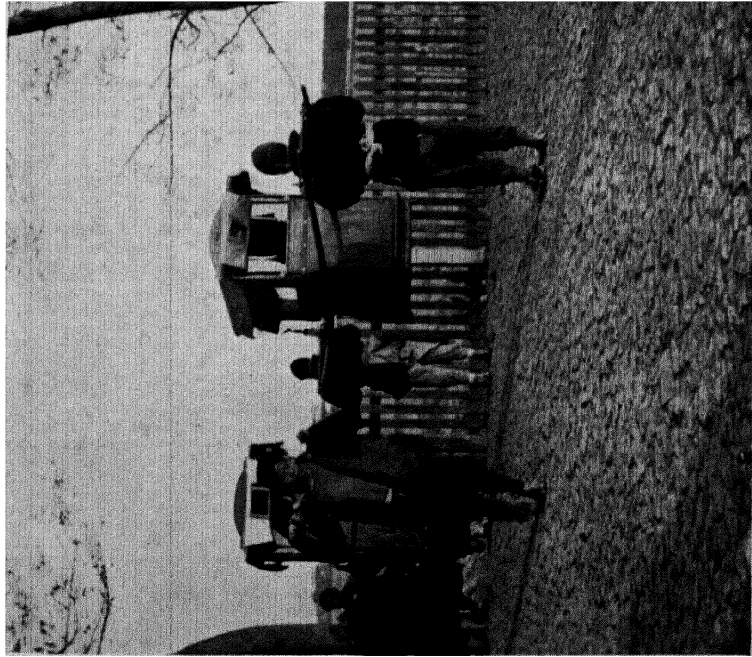
Then Chak—no, Sugase, I think—asked Howard if he would like some music, but he, with commendable firmness, declined with thanks. The truth was that, in the

next room there was another dinner-party going on, at which, already, Chinese musicians were playing—and, even muffled by the partition, it was almost more than we could bear. Japanese music is bad, but Chinese music is worse. There was a thing next door emitting sounds like a punctured bagpipe that was not only discordant but definitely evil. It sounded like a tom-cat with a sore throat trapped in a revolving door.

Music being "off" and the dinner drawing to a close, Chak—I'm sure it was Chak—catching the eye of each one of us in turn, flashed a silent query at us with lifted eyebrow, and, having received a smile and a shake of the head in reply, dismissed the twelve Peris, who filed out, bowing their adieus. It was thoughtful of you, Chak, my lad, and the height of hospitality and all that, but . . . It was expensive too, for he told me afterwards that each of those very exclusive girls receive two Mexican dollars for ten minutes of their time spent, as they spent it with us, in the company of diners.

In pursuance of the arrangements made for Howard by his banking friends, we rose very early next morning and caught the 7.54 a.m. train at the Shanghai North station to a town named Soo-chow, lying some fifty-four miles inland to the west-north-west.

The first-class compartment in which we travelled, except that it was upholstered in brown leather, might have been that of an English railway train, so similar was it. We passed many acres of paddy-fields, for the Province of Kiang-su is one of the chief centres of rice production and the quality of the rice it produces is of the very best. The rice grows in small fields. There are no fences or walls between them, but the mud is piled up all round each little division of ground, and, drying in the sun, forms a narrow footway just about wide enough for a person to walk on. As rice grows best in water the patches resembled small rectangular lakes. Mr. Nishido—the one that George called Chak—illustrating how the Chinaman wrings the utmost from everything, told us that



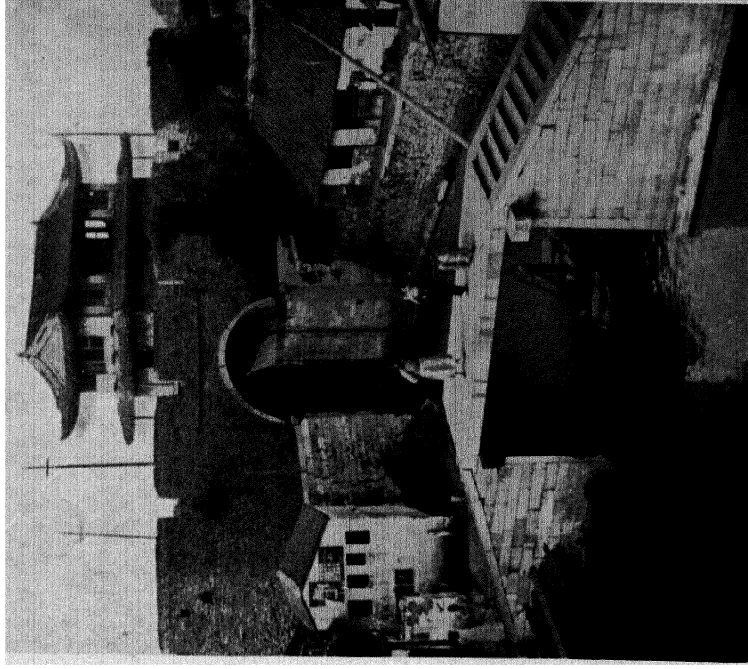
"Square boxes slung between two long poles."

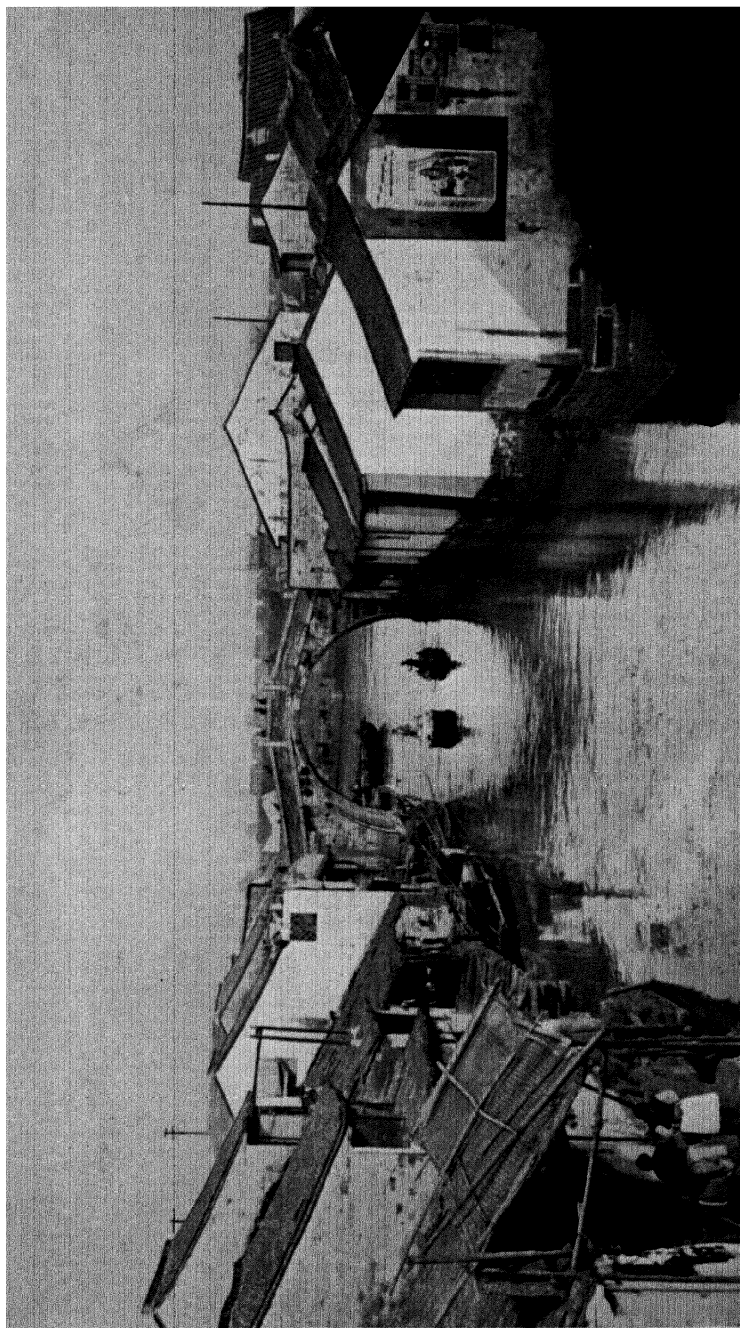
(see page 203)

SOO-CHOW.

"... a fine view of a water-gate."

(see page 203)





SOO-CHOW.

"Soo-chow has been called the Venice of China."

the water covering the paddy-fields is often stocked with tiny fish, which grow and fatten up while the rice is burgeoning.

On our left, almost all the way, was Soo-chow Creek, dotted with the ribbed sails of junks, and once we sighted an old pagoda standing on a hill and looking, as George said, rather like a pile of top-hats balanced one above the other.

An hour and a half's run landed us at Soo-chow station, which is outside the city walls, and on emerging into the road we were immediately mobbed by a shouting, yelling crowd of Chinese bandits offering us ponies, donkeys, carriages, rickshas, and palanquins. A few well-chosen verbal explosives from Messrs. Chak, Sugase, and Nishido, Inc., quelled the riot, however, and, selecting three two-seater pony-carriages, we piled in and clattered off over the cobbles in a procession towards the town.

After we had shaken off the horde of optimistic beggars and could look round, the first thing I noticed was the massive, castellated wall on our left which blocked out all view of the city behind it. Between ourselves and the wall was a wide canal, like a huge moat, surrounding the city on all four sides.

Chak, with whom I was riding—I said: "Excuse me, you *are* Mr. Chak, aren't you?" and he said, "No! I'm Mr. Nishido"—Chak told me that Soo-chow was founded fifteen hundred years ago, that its walls measured ten miles round, and that, being situated on the Grand Canal—that famous waterway nine hundred miles long that runs from Hang-chow to Tientsin—it was a very important city.

The road down which our three carriages were progressing was a fine wide boulevard, lined on the right with theatres and restaurants and bordered on the left by the placid, junk-ridden waters of the canal, with the grim walls of the city immediately beyond.

Turning off to the right, we shortly afterwards drew up at the famous house and garden of Leu-yen—a typical old Chinese rock-garden with miniature hills, lakes, streams, trees, flowering plants, bridges, and arbours, with paths

among them leading in every direction. Swimming about on the little lakes I noticed a number of small water-fowl with brilliant plumage of red, orange, black, and yellow, and with curious finlike projections sticking upwards from their folded wings. I tried to find out their breed, but Chak could only give me the Chinese name, and that was no help at all.

The Leu-yen garden lay about a mile to the west of the city, and after seeing all there was, we took the road to the city itself. Alighting at the bridge which spanned the canal, we crossed this on foot and passed beneath a great gateway in the massive walls. Large doors, lying flat against the wall, were hinged to the city end of the tunnelled gateway, and occupying the top portion of the archway were wooden railings which, when viewed from the inside, looked exactly like a portcullis. Once within the city we found ourselves in a narrow street, at the most not more than twelve feet wide, paved with concrete, bordered on each side by shuttered wooden buildings, and barred by a Chinese soldier carrying a rifle.

I cannot pretend to understand what passed between our three guides and the sentry, but it was quite evident that there was a hitch somewhere. Perhaps it was George's eye-glass, or, maybe, it was Howard's black billycock, but whatever it was the sentry was adamant. Then Chak had a brainwave. He came and asked us for our visiting-cards, and, upon receiving the three bits of pasteboard, waved them in front of the sentry's face and burst into a torrent of eloquence. Confronted with these magic talismans, the sentry obviously began to weaken, and, seeing this, Chak redoubled his efforts, stabbed at the cards with his forefinger, and finally, snatching the sentry's notebook, copied our names, *and* our addresses, into it, enclosed the three cards within its pages, and, closing it with a flourish, handed it back to its bewildered owner. That did the trick! The sentry smiled, presented arms sloppily, and all six of us stalked past him safely into the city of Soo-chow.

The altercation had, of course, attracted a large crowd

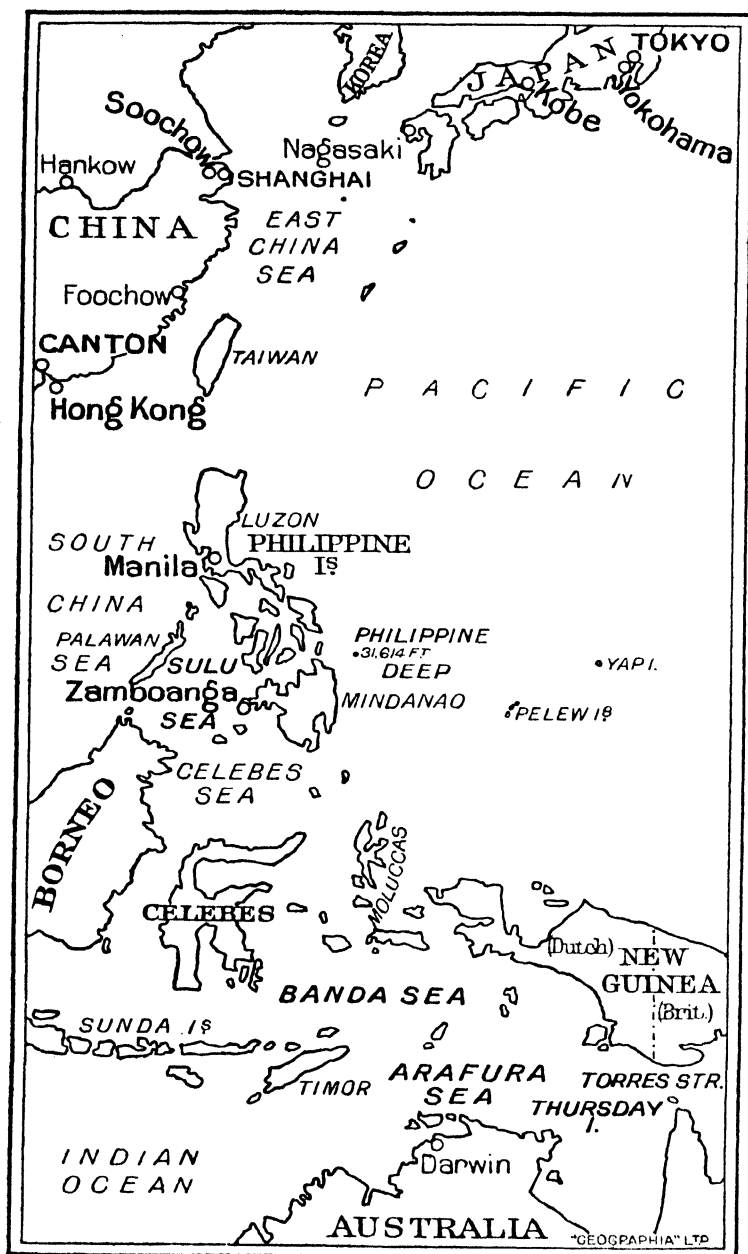
of bullet-headed and inquisitive Chinese, and progress was difficult, especially as a fine view of a water-gate immediately presented itself which Howard insisted upon photographing with all the usual pother and ceremonial. This completed, however, we took refuge in six palanquins, and plunged into the teeming activity of the city.

These palanquins were like square boxes with a cushioned seat, slung between two long poles, and with a canvas canopy supported at the four corners by wooden pillars. The poles were so long and so supple that the chair in the middle sagged downwards and bobbed up and down very considerably. Three bearers went to each chair—two to carry and one to relieve. The men travelled along at a good speed, half walking and half running, with the torso motionless and the hips waggling. At intervals, whoever was acting as relief man would duck beneath the shafts, shoulder the poles, and, without slackening speed for an instant, slip into the other man's place. It was really an excellent way in which to go sight-seeing, for, besides being comfortable, one was raised above the heads of the people and could see into the open shops on either side. I had no idea of where we were making for, and did not care—the sights and sounds and the smells of our journey being occupation enough to assimilate or avoid.

Soo-chow has been named the Venice of China owing to the scores of canals that divide it from north to south and from east to west. Single-storey houses, most of them whitewashed and many of them with tiny landing-stages, bordered the banks of these waterways; sampans roofed with matting, and some with small sails, crowded their surface; and the many quite graceful bridges that spanned them were all steeply hump-backed.

Following each other in single file, our palanquins swung through a succession of narrow, reeking alleys, swarming with natives who, at the grunting cries of our bearers, flattened themselves against the shops to make way for us. The Chinese have most of the shops of a kind grouped together along a single street—the Street of the

HALF THE SEAS OVER



THE EAST COAST OF CHINA

Lantern Makers, the Street of the Fruit Vendors, the Street of the Pipe Makers, and so on. In the Street of the Butchers I saw a sheep, which had just been killed, being skinned and disembowelled, whilst a pack of hungry-looking dogs stood by, licking their chops and waiting to lap up the blood. Some of the meat hanging up not only looked disgusting but even puzzled me as to its origin. I assumed they were entrails, but I had no idea that even Chinese animals harboured such disgusting things as those within them.

On one stall were thousands of nasty greenish-brown worms, all crawling over each other in a slimy heap. These, I learnt later from Chak, were culled from the rice-fields, and, when cooked, are esteemed a delicacy. The Chinese working classes have, nominally, two meals in the day, one at about eight o'clock in the morning and the other at six o'clock, or thereabouts, at night, and both usually consist of rice—cooked so that each grain is separate—together with a little chopped-up pork or fish, and some fried vegetables. They have a queer taste in eggs too; the more “gamey” they are, the more they relish them.

Once we passed over a canal in the dry bed of which excavation work was proceeding. Not a single steam-engine was to be seen, only hundreds of coolies carrying the earth away in baskets, in a never-ending procession. The almost exclusive use of man-power for all purposes in China is a thing that strikes one very forcibly. Great tree-trunks are sawn into boards, not by steam-driven circular saws, but by men pulling and pushing on a double-handed blade; native vessels are unloaded, not by cranes, but by long lines of coolies; streets are sprinkled, not by water-carts, but by two men who carry water in a bucket and scatter it about with a long-handled dipper; grain is ground into flour between stones turned laboriously by human power; piling for the support of buildings is driven into the soil by a weight which is pulled up by ropes passing over pulleys, and then suddenly released—I saw them actually doing this, and at least fifty men were tailing on the ropes and singing a chanty as they hauled.

Chak said that the chief reason for this universal use of man-power, and stubborn disinclination to adopt labour-saving devices, is due to the fact that there are such an enormous number of natives who must find work to do. We, in the West, are learning now, when it is perhaps too late, that machinery and labour-saving expedients, with all their apparent advantages, can be overdone. Even in Soo-chow, however, there are now, at least, three factories operated with modern machinery—one cotton-spinning and two silk-filature mills.

Our cavalcade of palanquins finally arrived at the Temple of Confucius at the south-western corner of the city, a series of fine gateways leading to a building containing a number of lofty and elaborately decorated halls. Not far from the temple was a pagoda which we also went to see, its six "terraces" each terminating in a series of up-turning spikes.

Mounting again into our chairs, we visited two more temples, one containing a hall with a large Buddha, flanked by large bronze bells and backed by an extraordinary vertical "landscape", coloured brightly and with scores of gilded gods projecting from it.

We took tiffin at a Chinese restaurant where, upstairs and overlooking the intersection of two wide and busy streets, we were served with a most excellent meal: oxtail soup, mandarin fish, chicken, roast quail, cheese, and tea. Down below in the street a never-ending stream of rickshas, palanquins, donkeys, and wheel-barrow threads their way through swarming crowds of people, and it was all so fascinating that I would gladly have stayed there for a couple of hours, just watching. All these thousands of human beings, hurrying to and fro like ants, absorbed, self-interested, each brain intent upon its own personal business of earning money wherewith to go on living. And all over China tens of millions were doing the same thing—and all over the whole wide world. . . . Scrabbling always just to keep body and soul together!

But our three Chinese friends, determined that we should waste no moment of our time, chased us out again

into our waiting palanquins, and once more, with Howard's billycock hat bobbing like an oriflamme in front, we plunged into a maze of unsavoury passages.

Howard wanted to buy some jade, and on our way to the Street of the Jade Merchants we passed through the filthiest and poorest quarter of the city. The soil was saturated with the foul drainage of centuries, every street corner was a dustbin, the natives were the poorest of the poor—what filthy rags they wore were alive with vermin—and, on every side, public latrines stank to the skies which, save for the merest slit, were invisible between the ramshackle roofs which almost met above us. A filthy warren, seething with creatures that seemed more animal than human.

But by and by we came to a more reputable section, and the procession halted before a shop whose open door showed little of interest. There was certainly nothing very attractive to be seen in the front room—a few bits of green jade and an old sword or two, but nothing worth while. But, in the room behind, the old Chinaman had some wonderful stuff—pieces of valuable jade and ornaments made from jade, all arranged neatly on white paper in a series of glass-covered boxes.

Although jade varies in colour from black to a pure clear white, green is the most common form, and the kind that is tinted a greenish-white is the most highly prized. It is held in the highest esteem by the Chinese, not only for its colour but also for the appeal it makes to the sense of touch. The wizened old shopkeeper showed us arm-bangles, hairpins, finger-rings, thumb-rings, tiny vases, back-scratchers—like tiny toasting-forks with in-curving prongs—and a host of other articles of ornament and of *vertu*, all fashioned out of this fascinating stone. George and I bought a pair of arm-bangles apiece, and Howard purchased quite a selection of things, though what he, being a bachelor, could possibly want with hairpins, ear-rings, and finger-rings I failed to see.

By the time we had finished here the afternoon was well advanced, and we had to make rather a dash for it

to the station. We rode in our palanquins to the Tsangmen Gate, exchanged here into three pony-carriages—which are not allowed inside the city walls owing to the narrowness of the streets—and, with our jehus shouting and our steeds travelling *ventre à terre*, we arrived at the station in a cloud of dust and just in time to catch the five p.m. train back to Shanghai.

The next morning, after bidding a friendly adieu to our three Celestial cronies, we embarked again upon the *Sphinx*, which gallant vessel, after passing into the great Yangtse River, reached the open sea at sunset, and, swinging her bows towards the south, headed for Hong-Kong.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

HONG-KONG

It is 810 miles from Shanghai to Hong Kong, and, steering a course that took us between the island of Formosa and the mainland of China, nearly three days were occupied in covering the distance.

Quite a number of new passengers had come aboard, and amongst others was an American named Shuster, who went out of his way to make himself pleasant to George and to me. He was a tall, youngish-looking man, clean-shaven, upstanding, and full of pep and bounce, who was on his way to Manila on business connected with a rather mysterious gold-mining proposition.

Shuster knew without any assistance what the "Hon." in front of George's name stood for, and it became rather obvious to me that he hoped to inveigle my friend into investing in his concern, and, perhaps, allowing his name to appear on the Board of Directors. But though George may wear an eye-glass he is no fool, and, listening blandly and with a noncommittal air to the spate of sales-talk, he raised no objection when Shuster suggested that he would like to meet us again in Manila when we arrived there at a later date, and take us motoring into the interior of the island. He himself was proceeding straight to Manila by the first available boat from Hong-Kong, whereas we intended to stay over and have a look round. What with the Baron's present hospitality—unwitting though it was—and now Shuster's in prospect, we seemed to have struck a good patch.

We had sailed from Shanghai at noon on Tuesday, and

at six-thirty on the following Friday morning the *Sphinx*, gliding through a turquoise sea that sparkled beneath the newly risen sun, snaked through the Lyee-mun Channel and arrived in Hong-Kong Roads.

Hong-Kong is always spoken of as a town, whereas it is really the name of the island, thirty-two miles long, upon which stands Victoria, the capital city. The island lies off the Kowloon peninsula of China, from which it is separated by a narrow channel varying in width from a quarter of a mile to a mile. Practically a mountain-top, Hong-Kong runs up to an eighteen-hundred-foot peak in the centre, and the city of Victoria, facing Kowloon across the Roads, extends for about five miles along its coast. In the level but comparatively narrow business section along the water-front there are wide streets and magnificent buildings, but roads and great white houses also climb in a series of boldly planned terraces up the flank of the mountain peak behind. The name "Hong-Kong" means "Fragrant Springs", a reminder of the days when ships of the old British East India Company used to call in and fill up with drinking-water from the clear streams.

Like the modern child who takes aeroplanes entirely as a matter of course, one is inclined, unthinkingly, to regard an outlying post of the Empire, like Hong-Kong, as a natural phenomenon, as something that has more or less always been there, like Land's End or the North Foreland. And yet it is less than a hundred years ago that British traders, fleeing from Canton and Macao, found precarious refuge on its rocky shores. Three years later, in 1841, it was ceded to Great Britain, and twenty years after that, Kowloon, on the mainland opposite, was the subject of a further Treaty. Thirty-four years ago we negotiated for a further piece of territory on the Peninsula, and, altogether, nearly four hundred square miles of the Chinese mainland has now been leased to us for a period of ninety-nine years. Hong-Kong stands at the crossroads of the East, and an enormous trade flows in and out of its marvellous harbour.

The *Sphinx* slowly threaded her way though the crowded shipping to her wharf on Kowloon Point—and I felt glad to be alive. Under the hot morning sun—for Hong-Kong lies just within the tropics—a fleet of vessels lay spread out upon the glittering blue waters. Stately craft lay at anchor—here a Nippon mailboat, there a P. and O. liner, all buff and black, flying the Blue Peter, over yonder a great white C.P.R. Empress boat with a wisp of smoke floating lazily from her forward funnel—and merchant vessels of every nation with clacking derricks and with bumboats clustering round their rust-streaked sides. Chinese junks looking like Spanish galleons, hooded sampans rocking on the tide, and a swarm of steam launches skimming to and fro and tooting with fussy importance, added to the busy scene.

Beyond and above towered the Peak of Hong-Kong, sheering up out of the blue water—a huge rock, green to the topmost summit with semi-tropical vegetation, save where, clustered thickly at the base and more thinly scattered on its higher slopes, the walls of stately houses blazed white in the sun against their emerald setting.

Bidding *au revoir* to Shuster, and promising to cable him the date of our arrival in Manila, we leaned on the rail watching the great vessel sidle towards the wharf. No sooner had we touched than two Japanese came hurrying aboard, and with smiles and bows and fervent hisses, introduced themselves to Howard as the Hong-Kong emissaries of the beneficent Baron. Howard presented them to us with a smile on his face that said as plainly as words: “There you are, you poor fish. Hong-Kong is British Empire and the sun may never set on it and all that, but *you* aren’t met wherever you go by a brace of hissing Japanese bankers. . . .”

Messrs. Niwa and Hayashi, the two Japanese, seemed rather staggered to find three guests where they had only expected one, but, after hissing thoughtfully for a moment, they pulled themselves together and superintended our combined disembarkation. Smart white launches, with brilliantly polished brass funnels, belonging to the Hong-

Kong Hotel, carried us swiftly over the dancing blue waters to Victoria, a seven minutes' trip. The nearer we approached to the Bund, the handsome esplanade along the water-front, the more magnificent appeared the buildings which fronted upon it. Hong-Kong buildings have an architectural style of their own. Each floor of the four or five storeys has its wide terrace, faced with a succession of pillars and arches, and the whole frontage thus presents a very handsome and ornamental appearance. On the ground-level the pavement itself takes the place of the terraces of the floors above, and the shop windows are set back within the cool shadows of the overhanging arches.

Howard had already booked a room for himself at the Hong-Kong Hotel, and so George and I arranged to stay there also, at a cost of ten Hong-Kong dollars each—£2-10-0—for bed and breakfast.

In the afternoon the two Japanese came for us in a six-cylinder Buick, and took us for a drive right round the island, a distance of about twenty-seven miles. First of all we climbed steadily up the Peak by wonderfully graded roads and past lovely houses until we reached Mountain Lodge, the Governor's summer residence, which commanded a magnificent prospect of the harbour, of grey-green islands set in a sea of indigo-blue, and, away in the distance, of the azure-tinted mountains of the Chinese mainland. The whole panorama, clear, and as sharply defined as if viewed through a crystal, lay spread out below us like a brilliantly coloured contour map.

Dropping down almost to sea-level again, we left the city behind and, skimming along a perfect road through Chinese fishing villages a-swarm with moon-faced, slant-eyed children, and past lovely quiet bays with bathing beaches of white sand, came at last to Repulse Bay and the hotel of the same name, which is run by the Hong-Kong Hotel people. Here was the height of luxury indeed, the perfection of service in super-perfect surroundings. There is a splendid golf-course close by, and what with this and the racecourse and the bathing beaches and the general

tenour of the life out there, I could not help thinking that a man whose profession plants him down in Hong-Kong has a great deal for which to be thankful.

That night, as guests of the Baron—upon whom be blessings—we dined at the Chinese restaurant of Mr. Fung Wu Lau, where we found an environment that was very different from the bed-sitting-room atmosphere of our feast at Shanghai.

The restaurant was in the heart of the Chinese quarter, but it was a Chinatown that was well-ordered, clean, and brightly lighted, because it was under British control. Our eating-house, like the buildings on either side and also across the street, consisted of four storeys, each with its wooden-railed balcony. The private room on the second floor in which we were entertained was furnished with a shining black table in the centre of the room, surrounded by straight-backed chairs standing upon a floor that was bare and highly polished. The walls, to a height of about five feet, were panelled with wood, and above this level and reaching to the ceiling were divided into rectangular spaces by wooden laths, each panel so formed being covered with white paper decorated with a small design in black and white. The ceiling was also patterned into rectangles and was papered with a material that had a kind of sheen on it. Standing against the wall opposite the door was a wooden settee, long enough to seat three people, but whose centre was occupied by a small short-legged table, leaving one cushioned seat on either side. Hanging on the wall above the table was an elaborate Chinese-style landscape painting, unframed and in the form of a scroll—very similar to the Japanese *kakemono*, but named *chung tang* by the Chinese—and this was flanked by two narrower scrolls inscribed with large written characters.

I opened the french windows, and, stepping out on the verandah to lean my elbows on the railing, I looked down upon the bustling activity in the street below. Trams clanged past at intervals, motors hooted and swished by, rickshas, bearing black-garbed Chinese girls or im-

passive-looking Chinamen with folded arms, rolled noiselessly along on their mysterious affairs, and in and amongst all the traffic padded bare-footed and chanting coolies with their queer waddling trot, carrying baskets, piles of boxes, bales, flagons—what you will—suspended on each side of them from a wooden shoulder-yoke. The pavements were crowded, too, with hurrying natives in sombre garb, and a ceaseless hum of activity rose from the lighted canyon at my feet. The air about me was full of a queer elusive perfume—of joss-sticks and incense, of spices and cedar wood—the colourful smell of the East.

Suddenly I felt depressed. All these teeming thousands of human beings, plotting, contriving, lusting, suffering—and to what end? And I myself? What was I doing in this *galère*, amongst all these strange and terrifying people? And if it came to that, *why* was I, at all—why was I born? Why was *anyone* born? What *for*? A paralysing sense of the futility of everything, and a panic of loneliness, descended upon me like a black cloud.

In a building opposite, across the swarming street, the white face of a girl showed moonlike above verandah rails, and, as I gazed with lack-lustre eyes, she raised a slim white arm . . . and waved to me. Thinking of unutterable things, I waved back. She leaned forward eagerly, and, in the light from the street, I saw her red lips part in a smile, revealing a glimpse of pearly teeth. A jewelled chain encircled her white throat, and swayed . . . glittering. She was beautiful . . . and friendly . . . and warmly human. Perhaps—perhaps after all Hong-Kong was not such a bad old place. Those people down below—what a cheery bunch they were when one looked more closely. And all the gay lights and the jolly hum of the traffic; it really was great fun, after all. I stood up and waved vigorously, and George's voice immediately behind me said: "You flatter yourself, me lad! She and I have been waving to each other for the past ten minutes. Anyhow, never mind now, come inside, because dinner's ready."

This was the menu :

Shark's Fin with Sliced Chicken.
Fried Duck.
Green Turtle with Soup.
Stewed Garoupa (Shek Pan Fish).
Boiled Chicken with Rice.
Sliced Teal with Fishmaw.
Boiled Chinese Salmon with Aster Petals.
Forced Quail. Pigeon Eggs.
Fried Shrimp with Vegetables.
Chicken with Walnut.
Birdsnest with Chicken Sauce.
Fried Shell Fish.
Boiled Crab with young Bamboo Shoot.
Cakes. Tea. Fruit.

Each course was brought to table in bowl-shaped dishes and placed in the centre, and we helped ourselves—using small porcelain ladles or chop-sticks, as the case might be, to lift as much of the contents as we desired into our own small porcelain bowls. Both George and I, of course, were experts in the use of the chop-sticks—those ivory rods, square at the holding end, which are held between the thumb and fingers and used as tongs—and Howard, who could not manage his at all, muttered something about its being “evidence of a misspent youth”.

The Chinese, like the Japanese, never use knives at table, all meat being already carved and cut up into small pieces. Take, for instance, the course described as “Boiled Chicken with Rice”. Two bowls were placed in the centre of the table, one containing rice, each grain of which was swollen and tender but lying separated from its neighbour, and the other holding chicken cut up into small white pieces. I ladled rice into my own small bowl, selected a few pieces of chicken which I laid on top, and then, raising the tiny bowl to my lips, I shovelled both meat and rice into my mouth as daintily as I could with the aid of my chop-sticks.

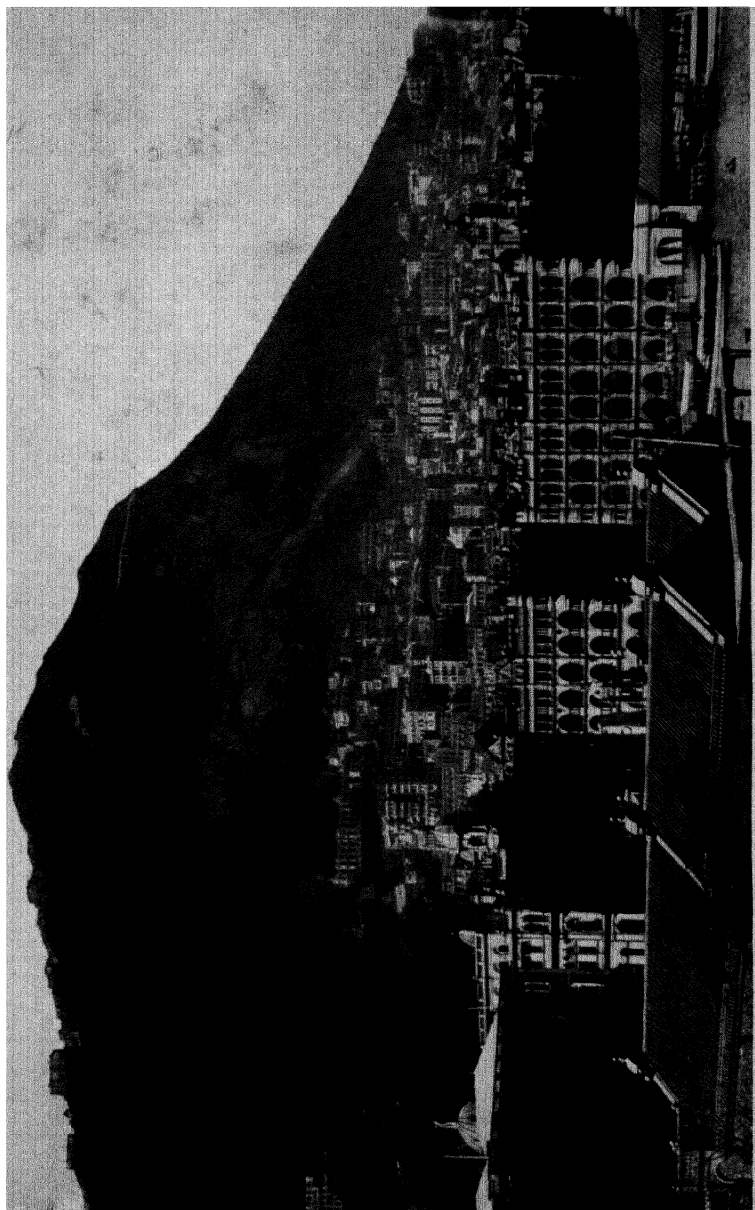
The item, “Boiled Chinese Salmon with Aster Petals”, was an especially interesting dish. In the centre of the table was placed a large silver bowl of boiling water kept at the bubble by a small blue spirit flame beneath. Small slices of raw salmon were then tipped into it and covered

with a fragrant pile of the delicately tinted petals of the aster flower. These were pressed down gently into the boiling water, and, after a lapse of about five minutes, we all helped ourselves. The aster petals served as a vegetable with the fish, and were quite good to eat, but it was more the appearance during preparation than the resultant taste that took my fancy. The idea of eating flower petals appealed to me.

During the whole meal we drank rice wine, slightly warmed, out of tiny cups without handles, and, as was the case with the drinking of *sake* in Japan, a fresh supply was constantly being brought. It was rather heady stuff and had the effect of dulling one's perceptions—which, perhaps, accounted for the fact that we were able to bear without violent protest the music provided for us by two little Singing-Girls who came and squatted in a corner and picked discordancies from the strings of their zithers.

At the conclusion of the meal tiny wire forks were supplied with which to eat the sticky cakes, and tea was made separately for each of us. Tea-cups without handles were brought, a spoonful of tea-leaves placed in the bottom, boiling water poured upon them, and the cup was then covered with a close-fitting silver lid and left to brew. Brewing completed, the lid was removed and a perforated silver disc was dropped within the cup. In the centre of the disc was a short upstanding rod which, when the cup was raised and tilted to the lips, naturally touched the tip of one's nose—which thus kept the disc firmly pressed to the bottom of the cup, holding the tea-leaves beneath it.

After dinner we travelled back to the centre of the city by rickshas, and took the wire-cable tramway up the Peak to Victoria Gap, twelve hundred feet above the harbour. It was a perfect night, and the stars burned above us in a blue-black sky. Below, another star-spangled expanse lay unfolded—the glittering lamps of the city, and, spread upon the black waters, the twinkling lights of the shipping. Away to the left was a patch like the Milky Way, the myriad lanterns of the Chinese boat-dwellers. A little spark—a



HONG-KONG.

" . . . beyond and above towered the Peak of Hong-Kong."

(see page 211)



HONG-KONG.

" . . . a Chinatown that was well ordered."

(see page 213)

motor-boat—travelled swiftly through the motionless lights of the shipping, and, as I raised my eyes to the glittering heavens, its counterpart in the form of a falling star raced down the sky. There are some scenes that imprint themselves definitely and for ever upon the memory, and this night view of the myriad lights of Hong-Kong harbour, spread out below like a twinkling fairyland, for me, is one of them.

The next two or three days we spent in wandering round the city, on foot and in chairs and rickshas, seeing the sights, shop-gazing, sitting in the club, and poking about in the Chinese quarter. One day we slipped over on the ferry to Kowloon, and had a walk round the esplanade and the barracks of the Indian troops. A great deal of constructional work was going on, with gangs of coolies reclaiming land, levelling it, and building docks and great warehouses; because, if the plans of the "Greater Hong-Kong" movement succeed, it is believed that Kowloon will eventually become a great commercial centre through which will flow the larger part of the trade of all South and Central China.

Howard's Japanese friends were always at hand with advice and help, and we saw and did far more worthwhile things under their guidance than would have been the case otherwise. And if, perhaps, I have not made it quite clear, I want to say that the expenses incurred on every excursion, including meals and transport, whether by train, steamer, car, ricksha or chair, the Chinese dinners and the entertainment, musical and otherwise, provided thereat—everything, in fact, save our own hotel expenses—were defrayed for all three of us, both in Shanghai and in Hong-Kong, by the Baron's representatives. It was, of course, in so far as Howard was concerned, a matter of business, but George and I were outsiders, and not in any way entitled to the Baron's hospitality. We had felt very uncomfortable about it—so much so that we had written a joint letter to the Baron from Shanghai, explaining our position. All our qualms were set at rest, however, on the day after our arrival in Hong-Kong, by a cable we

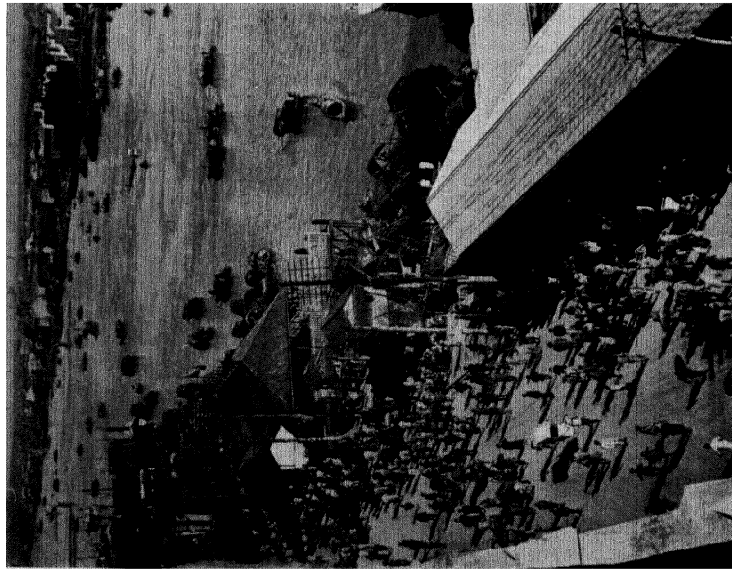
received from Tokyo inviting us very warmly, as friends of Mr. Howard, to join the party.

It was, therefore, with an easy mind that we set forth with our American friend, accompanied by Hayashi, Niwa, and a Chinaman named Yung Mak, on a two-day visit to Canton.

We embarked at 10 p.m. on the queerest old steamboat I have ever seen, a vessel propelled by side paddles worked by an ancient and groaning beam engine. The horizontal beam—pivoted in the centre, with, at one end, a vertical arm coupled to the crank on the paddle-shaft and, at the other, a piston pushed up and down by the wheezing engine—occupied the middle of the vessel and towered above the ill-lit decks, and we had not been going more than an hour before one of the bearings seized up. At the moment we were threading our way through a maze of rocks and islands that loomed through the darkness on all sides. There was a half moon, and as we began to drift towards a particularly spiky-looking island, whose outlying pinnacles gleamed grey and forbidding in the silver radiance, George very audibly expressed his regret at having trusted himself to such a floating deathtrap. Three Chinese engineers, mounted on ladders, worked feverishly with spanners trying to loosen the seized bearing on the after-end of the great beam. There was no time to clean out the choked oil leads, and so, contenting themselves with merely loosening the nuts on the top half of the bearing, they started up the engine again. There was a fearful clanking as the piston began to move up and down, but the paddles threshed the water and we slowly drew ahead out of danger.

Sleep was out of the question, of course, even if we had felt like it, because at the top and bottom of every piston-stroke the loose bearing clanked so heavily that it shook every timber in the ship.

But we moved steadily forward over the moonlit waters, passing many grey islands whose cliffs echoed back to us the hammering tumult of our passing, and, when the sun topped the horizon, gilding with its level



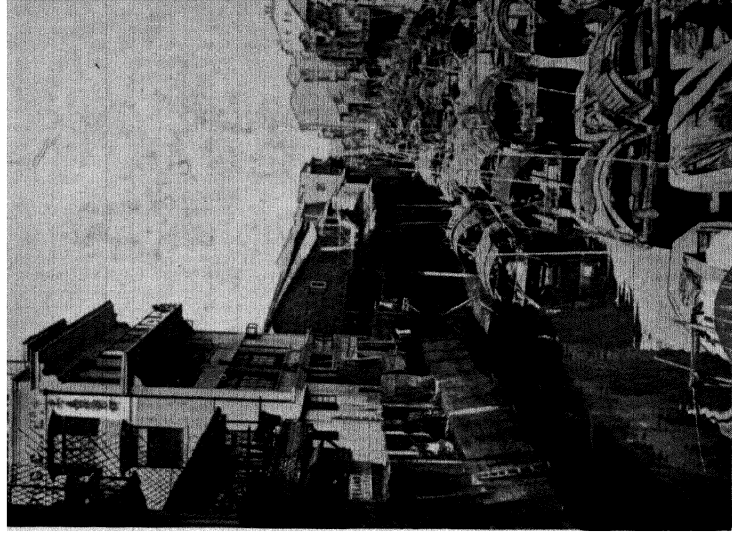
“ . . . the Bund, a wide promenade along the banks of the Pearl River.”

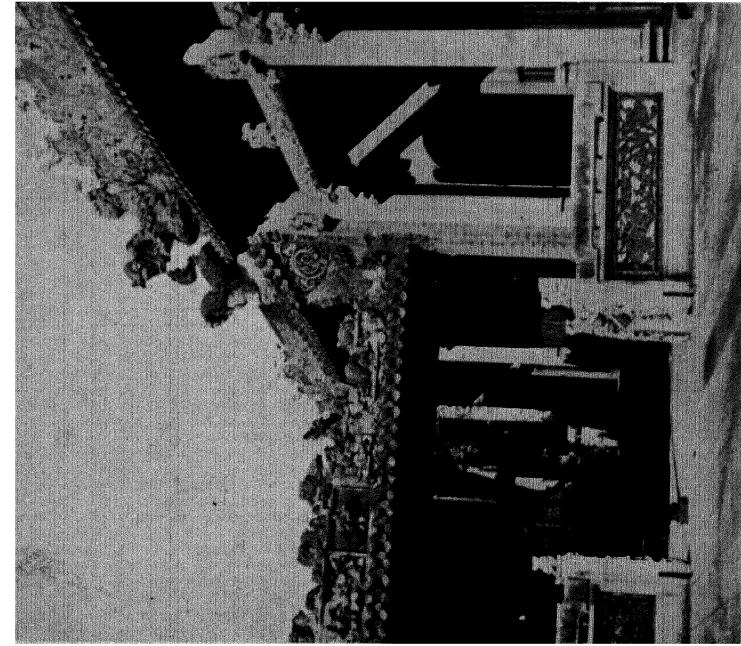
(see page 219)

CANTON.

“ . . . the curved mai roofs of sampans. . . .”

(see page 221)

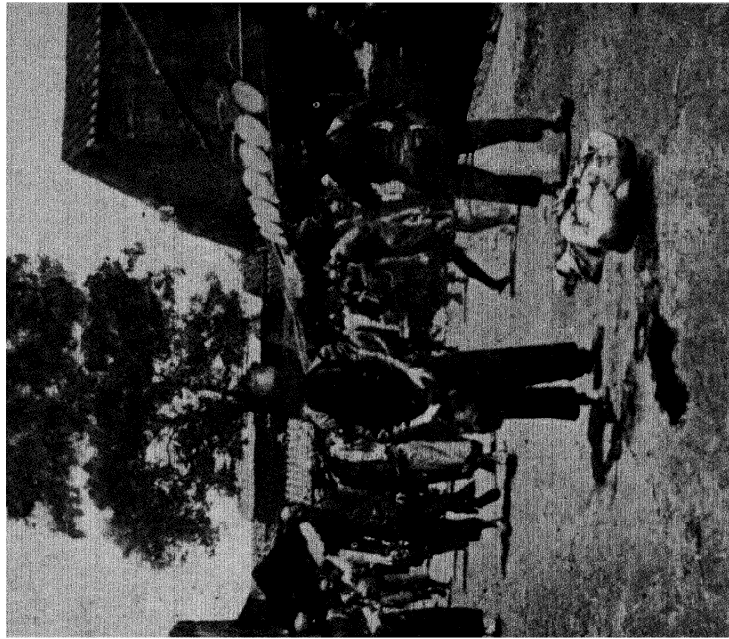




CANTON.

“ . . . the ancestral mausoleum of the Chen family.”

(see page 221)



“ ‘Liver pilate—choppee off head!’ ”

(see page 224)

rays a pagoda which thrust upwards like a slender golden pencil through the mists of dawn lying low on the paddy-fields, we found that we were well up the Pearl River and threading our clangorous way through a growing crowd of shipping.

One Chinese vessel took my attention particularly. It was a long, boxlike craft with a very low roof of bamboo matting, beneath which lay or squatted a swarm of native passengers. At the stern was a paddle-wheel about eight feet in diameter, worked, not by an engine, but by about twenty men, who, holding on to cross-bars above their heads, trod downwards without ceasing upon a series of steps which radiated from four revolving shafts, placed one behind the other, extending from one side of the vessel to the other. In other words, a stern-wheel passenger boat operated by a man-power treadmill. And in spite of the current the craft was making headway at a rate of about three miles an hour.

The river was alive with shipping : large three-masted ocean-going junks, river junks of lighter draught, Canton sampans rowed by five or six muscular-looking women, swift-moving sampans looking like a floating slipper with hooded forepart and low flat waist and stern, seventy-foot passenger junks carrying several guns on deck as a protection against pirates, eighty-foot cargo junks with three crimson-painted gangways on each side, flat-bottomed river vessels with an oar at bow and stern, and in and amongst all this welter, steam launches and tugs tearing up and down, tumbling the muddy waters of the river before their thrusting bows.

Canton is only seventy-eight miles distant from Hong-Kong by water, but owing to our mishap and consequent limping progress, it was turned eight o'clock in the morning before we drew abreast of the riverside wharf and stepped ashore on the Bund—the wide macadamized promenade which, bordered by tall and imposing white buildings, extends for a distance of more than two miles along the banks of the Pearl River.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

CANTON

THE Victoria Hotel, where rooms had been booked for us in advance, lay on Sha-meen, the island, bounded by the river and a canal, which is occupied entirely by British and other foreigners. It is beautifully laid out with park-like avenues shaded by banyan trees, and, with its tennis-courts and gardens, its banks, trading firms, hotels, foreign consulates and churches, constitutes a distinct community. Two fine bridges span the canal, and these are closed at night as a precaution against thieves and rowdies.

Taking rickshas along the Bund and over the bridge to the hotel, we dumped our handbags, and, after a hurried breakfast, set forth in a procession on a tour of inspection. Howard, George and I rode in palanquins, but our three Oriental friends chose gaily-caparisoned donkeys, and formed a mounted escort. Our first objective was the Temple of Chen-sz Shu-yuen, and our way led through a maze of narrow alleys, packed with Chinese and lined with shops, each sporting an attractive-looking signboard. Chinese signboards are meant to catch the eye, and they certainly succeed. Some of them, suspended at each side of the shop front, were at least twenty feet long. A few were set in stone bases, whilst others hung over the entrances or within the shop itself, but all bore Chinese characters painted in brilliant reds and greens. Most of them were also lavishly gilded, so that, looking down a street of shops, one's eyes were dazzled with the scores and hundreds of gaily-coloured boards as the sun flashed on their burnished gold.

Looking upwards as we passed through the narrow lanes, I noticed that many of the streets were roofed over with bamboo trelliswork, a support, during the hot summer months, for the mats which would be thrown over them to give a measure of shade and coolness to the swarming humanity sweltering down below on the stone-flagged pavements. Sometimes, emerging suddenly from a dark alley, our grunting coolies hoisted us up the steep hump-back of a canal bridge, where, for a brief moment, we glimpsed sunshine and blue sky above us, and, beneath, the curved mat-roofs of sampans that lay packed side by side on the hidden water. The respite was very brief, however, for in another moment we dipped down the other side and plunged once more into the crowded passages.

Not all the streets were lined by shops, for some ran between dwelling-houses of the poorer sort, presenting a vista of blank walls pierced only by ramshackle wooden doors. In Europe we build the most attractive side of our houses towards the street, and often throw the dirt into the backyard, but in China they build the least attractive—windowless—side outward, and throw all their refuse into the street. There are thousands of "home-workers" in Canton, and most of the lovely silk embroidery, the carved ivory, and the gold and silver work for which the city is famous, is made, wholly or in part, by the Chinese in their own houses.

The Temple of Chen-sz Shu-yuen is the ancestral mausoleum of the Chen family, and cost, so it is said, more than a million dollars to erect. Set amidst terraces and courtyards, it consists of a series of single-storey buildings whose roofs are a miracle of sculpture and embellishment. Pilalrs, eaves, ridge-poles, lintels and door-posts are decorated with magnificent frescoes and carvings, all brilliantly coloured in every hue of the rainbow, and glossy, like porcelain. Under the bright sunlight the effect was dazzling and amazing.

Within the main building, behind heavy carved tables bearing wonderful ceramic incense-burners, were alcoves

containing thousands of ancestral tablets arranged in row upon row banked in tiers one behind the other. I took the trouble to count the tablets in one alcove, and found that each row contained fifty, and that there were twenty-one rows in all, making a total of one thousand and fifty tablets altogether. On each tablet, which measured roughly six inches by three inches, was written the name and age of the deceased person whose memorial it was.

Ancestor-worship is universal throughout China, and the religion of filial piety is the foundation and the basis of all Chinese life—domestic, social, religious, and civic. Reduced to its last analysis, it is a form of personal vanity—the desire of every man to preserve his name for future generations. If he himself is not able to perform great deeds and thus be remembered by posterity, he hopes at least to be remembered by a son, a grandson, a great-grandson, and so on *ad infinitum*, in the desperate hope that someone, sometime, may make a lasting name for the family. Hence a good many things which are characteristic of Chinese life. It explains why there is such a high birthrate, for the more sons the more chance of one of them attaining fame, and also because it is believed that unless certain rites are performed at a man's grave by a *male* descendant, his spirit and that of his ancestors will be obliged to wander about the spirit world, begging rice. It explains why the man-child is cherished and the girl-child considered as of little account. It explains why such importance is attached to the bringing, even from far-away countries overseas, of a dead person to the ancestral burying-ground, for, if he is buried elsewhere, his spirit is doomed to wander unhoused, unfed, and for ever an outcast.

And it explains, too, why, in the home-life of the Chinese, so great a deference and respect is paid to their elders by the younger members of the family. Age is invariably respected. Even a ragged beggar-woman on the street, when addressed, is referred to as "Venerable Lady".

Within every household in China, even in the mat-

hovels of the poorest of the poor and in the cramped tunnels of the boat-dwellers, there is a small shrine which contains tablets in memory of ancestors and all members of the family who died after infancy. Incense is burned before the shrine night and morning, and twice each month offerings of fruit and food are laid before it with solemn prostrations. Believing also that the spirits in the next world stand in need of the same comforts and necessities as the inhabitants of this, the Chinese consider it their bounden duty to forward all these things to the deceased, the projection of the articles into the next world being achieved by means of burning them. But, instead of burning actual boats and houses and clothes and palanquins and money—which would be too expensive—bamboo and paper models are substituted for them, and the manufacture of these ingenious imitations is a very considerable industry in Canton.

Howard thoroughly enjoyed himself in the Temple of Chen, skipping about from one vantage point to another, peeping through his view-finder, twiddling his little knobs and clicking his shutter until his stock of films began to run low. And it certainly was a photographer's paradise, and would have been even more so if only we could have captured the brilliant colour effects.

Mounting once more into our palanquins, however, we set forth southwards with the "Flowery Forest Temple" as our goal, and on the way we passed through the Street of the Goldsmiths. All the signboards we had already seen, attractive though they were, paled into insignificance before those of the goldsmiths. Scarlet and gilt predominated, and in the entrances of many of the shops were massive screens most elaborately carved and all ablaze with burnished gold. The richness of the display was almost overpowering, and, moreover, advised of our coming by telepathy, or, maybe, by the clatter of our mounted escort, the optimistic jewellers were all gathered at their shop doors, bowing and smiling an invitation to us to enter their establishments.

We did stop at one of them and bought a few examples

of the marvellous kingfisher-feather and filigree silver jewellery which is a speciality of Canton.

The Wa-lam-tsz, or "Flowery Forest Temple", with its shrines and halls covering several acres, is one of the richest temples in the city, and is chiefly noted for its life-size gilded images of the five hundred immediate disciples of Buddha which, in long rows, line the sides of the shrine. Each of the statues is different, and all are supposed to be lifelike portraits. The bright sunlight came streaming in through the high windows, and, shining on their gilded surfaces, produced a very dazzling effect,—one that was irresistible to Howard's photographic soul. He immediately took his stance, and was just in the midst of his usual fussy performance when a priest came hurrying up and explained, through Yung Mak, that the taking of pictures was prohibited. This led to a good deal of argument, of course, and so, whilst they were hotly engaged, I quietly withdrew, and, balancing my camera on a convenient ledge, managed to take a very successful time-photograph, much to the indignation of Elias B. when I told him about it later on.

Yung Mak kept looking at his watch and rather hustled us through this particular temple, being anxious, as he explained, that we should visit another place before we returned to the hotel for tiffin. But in answer to my question as to what it was he wished us to see, he only returned a mysterious smile.

Once more, therefore, we climbed into our chairs and went a-burrowing through the alleys of Canton, twisting and turning until I lost all sense of direction, but emerging finally into an open space surrounded by buildings and mean-looking booths. At the far side of the square there stood a small knot of people, and in front of them, on the ground, lay a shapeless figure. Yung Mak, urging his overburdened steed, drew abreast of me, and, pointing towards the little crowd, cried :

"Too late ; so solly ; please esscuse."

"Too late for what ?" I queried.

"Liver pilate—choppee off head !"

"River pirate?" I exclaimed. "Head chopped off? Gosh! Does Mr. Howard know?"

"No, no," replied Yung Mak, shaking his head. "Pleasant surprise."

By this time our jogging bearers had carried us much nearer to the scene of execution, and the prone figure had revealed itself to be a headless corpse with blood pouring from the stump of the severed neck. Even as we approached, the executioner, an enormous fellow grasping a sword in one hamlike hand, bent down and picked up the severed head by the hair. The whole dreadful scene was so utterly unexpected, that our chairs were dumped down close to the corpse before any of us realized the full significance of what we saw. Yung Mak, addressing himself to Elias B., was full of apologies for that we had arrived just too late to witness the actual decapitation of this river pirate, but, perking up a little bit, explained that if we cared to wait, we should see an even more delightful spectacle—that of the cutting off of the arms and legs, and, finally, the beheading of a man who had murdered his brother. Even now, as Yung Mak pointed out, spectators were beginning to gather for this notable event—the punishment named "*linchi*", which is reserved for the most terrible of all crimes—that against the sacred family. Whilst our guide was talking, I looked round at the natives. Hardly any of them even spared a glance for the dead man, and many of them had resumed their chaffering at the stalls near by. To the Chinese, death is merely an incident, and their only interest in an execution is to note whether the victim meets his end with proper stoicism and sang-froid.

But in spite of Yung Mak's promises of further entertainment, Howard had had enough, and more than enough. His face had turned a ghastly green and he displayed every symptom of becoming violently sick. Waving his hands feebly and averting his eyes, he signed to his bearers to carry him hence, and Yung Mak, completely dashed, fell back and took his place at the very rear of our re-formed cavalcade.

After tiffin—which Howard missed entirely—we set forth again upon our travels, visiting first the Wa-tap or “Flowery Pagoda”, a magnificent nine-storied octagonal erection nearly three hundred feet in height and dating back to the sixth century. It soars up above the roofs of a maze of shantylike buildings, and is crowned with a slender copper spire topped with a great golden ball.

To me, our actual objectives, although extremely interesting, were by no means so fascinating as the crowded alleys through which we passed to reach them. Seated in our chairs, and borne at a level which was higher than the heads of the swarming natives, one caught tantalizing glimpses of a thousand things of interest—many of which, however, were so strange as to be unintelligible. Traveling in single file it was impossible, of course, to communicate with one another. Howard led the way, I came second, George was third, and the three Orientals brought up the rear on their little donkeys. Our palanquins were fitted with canopies and short side-curtains, and a door in front effectually closed us in.

It was whilst we were on our way from the Flowery Pagoda to the Temple of Shing-wong-miu that the speed of our passage considerably increased and that, simultaneously, I heard loud cries of “Oi” from George behind me. Leaning outwards and glancing backwards as well as I was able, I noticed George’s face, very red and agitated, bobbing up and down in a peculiar manner just above the front door of his palanquin. I didn’t quite understand why he was goading his bearers into such a breakneck pace, but concluded that the speed appealed to his warped sense of humour. I smiled tolerantly, therefore, and, nodding to him, sank back again into my furiously bobbing seat. But a renewed uproar of “Oi-s”, this time with a strong note of urgency in them, made me twist round and look back once more. And suddenly I perceived, behind those of the front bearer, a pair of legs clad in gents’ trousering, protruding through the bottom of George’s palanquin—and walking swiftly. They looked extraordinarily like George’s legs at first sight, but how

could they be? The idea was absurd, and so I sat back and resumed my survey of the shops. For the third time, however, a piercing succession of cries reached me from the vehicle behind, and this time there was no doubt at all about the urgency of them. There was something seriously the matter with George.

I looked backwards to see George's face, now glistening with perspiration and absolutely purple with rage, glaring at me from his front window, whilst below the chair George's legs—there was no longer room for doubt—were paddling swiftly in an effort to keep pace with the hurrying steps of his sweating coolies. I shouted to my front bearer to stop, and, hunching his shoulders, he broke into a shambling gallop. It was terrible. The natives on foot in the street shrank back against the shop-fronts and gazed with goggling eyeballs as the procession rushed past. But help was at hand. Yung Mak, seeing that something was amiss, spurred his steed forward, and, espying George's predicament, brought his palanquin to a sudden halt. Turning round, I was just in time to see George's bearers lower the chair suddenly to the ground—and to witness the totally unexpected apparition of George's head as it burst through the top of the descending canopy.

When at last we managed to extricate him from the ruins of his chair, and he had calmed down a little, he explained that, on rising from his seat to rearrange his cushion, the floor-boards had given way beneath his weight, dropping him through, with the result that for the last half-mile he had been running within the four sides of his sedan and shouting to attract the attention of his not only deaf, but, apparently, daft fellow travellers. Then suddenly George began to see the funny side of it all, and, to the astonishment of the serried ranks of Chinese onlookers who packed the street from side to side, he burst into a shout of laughter. I was laughing already, but Howard began to chuckle, Yung Mak and Hayashi and Siwa grinned, and smiles began to spread across the faces of our coolies and of the massed populace, until at the

last the whole street was rocking with merriment. I have an idea that Chinese street will never forget the afternoon when George fell through the bottom of his palanquin.

I don't quite know how our guides fixed up about the broken chair, but a new one was soon procured and we arrived without further incident at the Temple of Shing-wong-miu, better known as the Temple of Horrors.

Yung Mak seemed to have a gruesome idea of entertainment, for, undaunted by our disappointing reaction to the scenes on Execution Square in the forenoon, he smilingly led us into the Temple—and the very first thing we saw was a large carved setpiece depicting a lady being torn asunder by a pack of devils!

In the Temple of Shing-wong-miu the various punishments of the Buddhist hell are represented by groups of carved figures illustrative of evildoers undergoing varied forms of torture. Men are being crucified and disembowelled by demons, and women pulled apart by wild beasts. Some, bound between planks, are being sawn into pieces by devils, whilst others are being thrown into cauldrons of boiling oil. A special kind of torture has been ingeniously devised for every known crime, from that of stealing clothes from the coffins of the dead to that of making evil potions from their bones. It was a horrible show, but, being inanimate, not half so sick-making as the spectacle to which the gruesome lad had taken us in the morning. Still, it was bad enough, and, as George remarked, if that were a true representation of the hell that awaited Buddhists, he was all for the Salvation Army.

That night we dined on one of the famous Canton Flower-boats, now alas, destroyed by fire. One of the outstanding features of Canton are the boat-dwellers, of whom it is estimated there are more than a quarter of a million. Thousands of these people are born on the boats, live their lives there, and die without ever having set foot ashore. They live a life of their own, with their own customs and their own trades and social services. The barber, ringing a little bell, wends his way amongst them in a sampan; the river doctor, beating his gong, visits

his patients ; there are boats that sell firewood, and others that sell oil ; there are green-grocery boats and boats stocked with fish and pork and clothing. There are boat-hearses and floating joss-houses, and even the policeman travels round in his sampan, blowing on his conch-shell at all hours of the day and night. On many boats baskets hang over the stern containing ducks and hens and geese, or sometimes even a pig, and on the tiny after-deck of nearly every sampan you will see two or three children tumbling about with gourds or air-tight cans fastened to their backs to keep them afloat in case they fall overboard. How they earned the money to live was a puzzle to me, but they all seemed busy and cheery underneath the semicircular roofs of their tiny craft.

The Flower-boats of Canton—unfortunately, as I have said, completely destroyed by fire very soon after we were there—were floating restaurants, and consisted of rows of bargelike vessels, rather like Thames houseboats, moored in the Pearl River side by side and connected one with another by plank bridges. We took rickshas right down the Bund, and, embarking in a gilt and tinsel sampan, were rowed out to them. The one we boarded had a roofed-in top deck lighted by petrol lamps, with an elaborately carved black table occupying the centre space, surrounded by black chairs which were enveloped, after our arrival, in scarlet silk covers heavily embroidered with gold thread. The interval that elapsed before dinner was served—a very long interval, indeed, of at least two hours—was whiled away by Singing-Girls and musicians, who, although they doubtless did their best, only succeeded in producing a succession of noises which, to my untrained ear, resembled excruciating toothache translated into sound.

Yung Mak, however, was tremendously proud of one in particular of the Singing-Girls, and, acting as showman, he insisted on parading her before us. And she really was a work of art.

Her coat and trousers were of silk, the high-collared jacket being of a lovely azure shade and cunningly cut to

show its crimson crêpe lining and downward-hanging inner sleeves. It was embroidered with pink and lemon honeysuckle nestling amidst leaves of green, was bordered with allegorical motifs worked in gold thread, and fastened diagonally down all its length from the left shoulder to the hem with jewelled buttons. The trousers were jade-green and showed a blue lining above the white embroidered stockings. On her little feet were red shoes glittering with tinsel and glass jewels, and she carried in her hand a beautifully painted fan mounted on a stick of green jade. A band of the same green jade, cunningly fashioned, encircled her head and held in place tiny bouquets over each ear, whilst her hair, entwined with red silk strands, hung down over her breast in two glossy black braids that reached below her jacket's hem. Her ebony hair framed a little baby face the colour of old ivory, against which the carmined lips and black eyes stood out in startling contrast. From her ear-lobes depended long jade ornaments, tassels of seed pearls dangled from girdle and pouch, and on her tiny fingers were many rings. A crimson orchid lay like a splash of blood upon her childish breast, and every wave of her fan wafted the scent of some sweet perfume.

Yung Mak had every reason to be proud of his selection, for, as an example of dainty Chinese girlhood, I should say that little lady would have been hard to beat.

The dinner consisted of the usual Chinese dishes already described, though a certain piquancy was added by the addition of eggs which Yung Mak assured us were eighty years old. George, recalling the interminable wait before the meal, remarked, *sotto voce*, that he could well believe it.

We wound up the evening by visiting a gambling saloon where a game of *Fan-t'an* was being played. A handful of "cash" was scattered on the table, and an upturned bowl placed over as many as it would cover. The banker then raked away the "cash" four at a time, and we backed our guesses as to whether there would be one, two or three left over at the finish. There was no skill in the game

at all, of course—just guesswork—and in such a case, if the luck is out, one's best course is to pack up and go home. Our luck was out—and we packed up—and we went home.

The next morning we caught the eight a.m. boat back to Hong-Kong, but on an up-to-date steamer this time, belonging to a different shipping company. The captain, by name Donaldson, was a friendly soul, and was full of his plan to retire very shortly from the sea and to join his wife who was fruit-farming in British Columbia. I hope that by this time his schemes have matured, and that the answer to his fruity prayer has not been a lemon.

The approach to the bridge of the steamer was barred by stout steel railings, and coils of barbed wire were looped round every other avenue of approach to the officers' quarters and the navigating centre of the ship. Two armed guards with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets also did sentry-go up and down the bridge-deck. Precautions against pirates are more necessary on the trip from Canton to Hong-Kong than in the reverse direction, because it is the unpleasant custom of these gentry to ship as ordinary coolie passengers at Canton, and, when the vessel is at sea, to attempt to storm the bridge and seize the ship. If the attack is successful—and many of them have been—they steer their prize to one of the pirate lairs amongst the numerous islands at the river mouth, and either murder any remaining officers or hold them to ransom.

Down below in the after-hold were a number of enormous wooden tubs, into which a constant stream of fresh water was pouring, and which were full of living fish. Yung Mak told me they were Canton river-fish destined for the Hong-Kong market, and that quite a number of them had probably been caught by—of all things—trained cormorants. These black, snaky-looking birds are bred and taught to catch fish for their owners. A team of ten or twelve of them are taken out in a boat, usually at night-time, with a lighted brazier overhanging the prow to attract the fish. Reins are attached to each bird and a hempen cord fastened round its throat, just below

the pouch, to prevent it swallowing any it may catch. At a given signal all the cormorants glide into the water and dart about below the surface in pursuit of the fish, returning to the top only when their pouches are full. Each bird is then drawn into the boat, and, at the bidding of the fisherman, disgorges its catch, when it is sent again about its tantalizing business. The band round its throat is only tight enough to prevent the cormorant swallowing fish above a certain size—any small enough to slip through being reckoned as its proper perquisite.

We had tiffin on board and reached Hong-Kong at three p.m., to be met on the wharf by a milling crowd of Chinese fishmongers, all wearing straw headgear shaped like "tin hats", and carrying long poles threaded through the handles of wicker panniers about the same size as a clothes-basket. These they fought savagely to thrust aboard on the lower deck, where they were filled with flapping fish from the tubs, on a share-out system which seemed to me haphazard enough, but which, I suppose, was properly regulated.

On the following night we all went to a Chinese theatre, a substantial-looking building, the frontage of which was plastered with long narrow posters covered with brightly-coloured Chinese characters. Entering, we found ourselves in a well-lighted hall with a stage at the far end and filled with wooden benches occupied, for the most part, by a somewhat malodorous audience of Chinamen.

The performance had already commenced—two whole days ago—and we tiptoed lightly to vacant seats at the end of one of the rear benches. But we need not have troubled to do any tiptoe business because, regardless of the actors, the members of the audience were chattering and laughing, whilst white-coated boys, carrying trays of cakes and sweetmeats, wandered about in the brightly-lighted auditorium, crying their wares with shrill voices.

What the play was about I have not the faintest idea. The stage itself was merely a wooden platform with blank

canvas screens behind. The orchestra squatted on the left of it, whilst "footlights" shone down upon it from above. A few stools, a couple of chairs and a table were scattered about, and in the centre an insecure-looking structure, composed of more tables and chairs, piled up one on top of the other, represented the towering heights of a precipitous mountain. At the moment of our entrance the heroine—a young man dressed as a woman, for all female rôles are played by men on the Chinese stage—was climbing up this flimsy erection in a desperate attempt to escape the clutches of the villain—Yung Mak knew he was the villain because his nose was painted white—who, if he had not kept stopping to make horrible faces at the audience, could have stretched out his hand and grabbed her at any time.

Later, after the mountain had been cleared away by the scene-shifters, there was a wonderful fight between the hero, wearing a gorgeous gold-embroidered costume, and six opponents, whom he tackled one at a time. All were armed with long two-handed swords. The hero and Number One clashed their swords together, and Number One thereupon whirled himself round in a complete circle, whilst the hero politely waited. Then clash went the swords once more, and round went Number One again. By and by Number One fell down dead—or dizzy—and so Number Two stepped forward and went through the same performance, until, when the last man fell, all six scrambled to their feet and walked off the stage through one of the two entrances in the back-cloth. Meanwhile, scene-shifters walked on and off the stage and amongst the actors, moving chairs and tables about or just having a look round—but Yung Mak, sitting next to me, said that I must pretend not to see them because they were supposed to be invisible.

The orchestra, engrossed in their task, scraped at their fiddles, shrilled on their flutes, plucked at their zithers and clashed their cymbals, whilst the members of the audience laughed and talked and smoked and the shouting sweetmeat boys passed noisily to and fro. A

white-clad Chinese boy—a young student—sitting next to me, did his best to explain about the play, but his English was very rudimentary, and the only thing I clearly understood after half an hour's difficult conversation was that the action of the play was supposed to take place, for the most part, in a brothel. The performance was in its third and last day, and was made up of a succession of short plays, acted continuously, with rests only for eating and sleeping. The theatre in China ranks low, and the social position of an actor was, until quite recently, comparable with that of a barber.

On the last night but one of our stay in Hong-Kong there was a lunar eclipse, which created a good deal of consternation amongst the Chinese, who thought that the end of the world was at hand. And so relieved were they the next morning to find that everything was still normal, that they celebrated their deliverance by indulging in an orgy of fireworks. The Chinese are great on fireworks, the favourite kind being immensely long strings of crackers which are hung from roof to pavement.

We took the tram along Queen's Road to the Chinese quarter in Kennedy Town to see—and hear—the fun. From end to end of each street fire-crackers, hanging in long strings down the fronts of the houses, jerked and twitched and cracked, the red flash of their explosion flaring dimly through the haze of sulphur fumes that filled the narrow lanes. Now and then an even bigger crash announced the discharge of a bomb.

The Chinese are a noisy people—most Orientals are—and the deafening pandemonium not only, according to their beliefs, exorcizes the foul spirits of evil, but is to them as the sweetest music. Incidentally, from a purely hygienic point of view, the sulphur fumes, penetrating into every cranny, undoubtedly help to exorcize the foul spirits of disease—which is all to the good.

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During the afternoon of Thursday we fixed up official matters with regard to passports and visas with the

American Consul, and, when the next morning dawned, we bade farewell to our friend Elias B. Howard, who was embarking on the *Mishima Maru* for Singapore. We were extremely sorry to have to part company with him, for, apart altogether from the material advantages of our association, we had become quite fond of. However, it had to be, and we therefore went aboard with him, saw him comfortably settled in his palatial cabin, and with many expressions of goodwill and thanks for all his kindness to us, we made him an apple-pie bed when he wasn't looking, and subsequently waved adieu from Kowloon wharf as the great liner moved away on her fourteen-hundred-mile voyage south.

At sunset George and I also embarked, not, however, on a liner, but upon a small thousand-ton steamer named the *Yuen-san*, which was to carry us to Manila. The accommodation was rather primitive, but, as we were only to be on board for about three days, this was of little consequence.

We sailed at seven-thirty p.m. in the warm darkness of a perfect night of stars. Ships with portholes aglow lay motionless on the black water, arc-lamps sizzled and glittered along the water-front, and behind, looming against the starry heavens, rose the Peak of Hong-Kong, spangled to its topmost summit with tiny twinkling lights.

Moving cautiously at first through the crowded Roads and the narrow passage of Sulphur Channel, the engine-room telegraph at last clanged "Full Ahead", and, as I tumbled into my bunk, the friendly swish of sea and wind, the creak of straining woodwork and the cheery "trampling" of the engines made a familiar and welcome lullaby.

Off again !



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

MANILA

DURING the night we encountered the full force of the north-east monsoon, and everything became very uncomfortable. The *Yuen-san* was a small and rather ill-bred vessel, and, at the first sign of trouble, she threw all restraint to the winds. With strands of smoke blowing untidily from her single funnel, with screaming stays and weeping scuppers, she rolled and lurched shamelessly through the charging seas. On the south-easterly course we were pursuing the monsoon wind was blowing direct on our port beam, and the great rollers of the mis-named Pacific Ocean, with thousands of miles of momentum behind them, took us absolutely broadside on—with the result that the good ship *Yuen-san* rolled. Heavens, how she rolled ! It seemed sometimes just touch and go whether she would ever right herself again.

Everything that could move, moved—the water-bottles and tumblers in their loose wooden racks, soap and shaving things on the wash-basin shelf, the trunks beneath the lower berth, and the shoes; everything slid and drifted. Bunk-curtains swung out almost horizontal, suits and dressing-gowns described a wide arc across the wall, heavy clangs came from down below and crashes of crockery from the pantry. Over she goes—over—o-ver—gosh ! Will she never stop ? O-o-ver, o-o-o-v-e-r, slowing—stop ! And then a long, long wait, whilst one tenses the muscles and almost holds the breath. Ah-h-h- ! at last ! She's coming back again ! Quicker—quicker—she's level now, but still rolling. Over—o-over—further

still. Clink, clank go the tumblers ; clatter goes the nail-brush ; swoosh come the trunks ; clang goes something metallic and heavy down below ; crash from some more plates ; over she goes ; stopping, hanging poised—and then, swoosh ! Back she comes again.

George, of course, succumbed very early on, and, in the infrequent intervals during which he was not gazing spellbound into his storm-pan, his ghastly face glimmered palely in the wan rays of the bulkhead light.

When morning came and I emerged upon the reeling deck, it was to find the *Yuen-san* wallowing amidst enormous seas which, as we swooped down into the trough, came shouldering from the north-east towards our streaming sides in an endless succession of great grey hills of foam-flecked water. The scuppers were alternately awash, and the deck tilted over to such alarming angles that a chair, unless lashed to a rail, was out of the question. It was, in fact, impossible to take a step at all without hanging on to something.

I ought to have been very ill, of course, and I haven't the faintest idea why I was not. Sea-sickness is like a stiff neck—either you have it or you haven't—and in either case nothing much can be done about it. The captain of the *Yuen-san*, old-timer though he was, was very seasick indeed, and he told me he was always like that in bad weather.

At breakfast-time only one other passenger besides myself turned up—or, perhaps, in the circumstances, I should say “put in an appearance”—at the fiddle-enclosed table in the small saloon, and the meal was taken under great difficulties.

The next day, Sunday, was no better as regards the rolling, but the clouds were gone and the tropic sun blazed down upon a deeply-furrowed sea of ultramarine-blue, capped to the far horizon with tumbling crests of dazzling white foam. As an aid to our progress and a preventative of excessive scend, the captain had rigged a try-sail, and, staggering but still persistent, the *Yuen-san* was forging ahead at a goodly pace.

At about six p.m., with a most wonderful sunset behind us, we passed into the lee of Cape Bolinao—on Luzon, the most northern island of the Philippine group—and the motion, consequently, became much less severe. At dinner-time there was quite a good attendance, passengers appear-



THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

ing whose presence aboard one had, so far, not even suspected. George, pale but determined, set himself to make up, in the course of one encyclopædic and gargantuan meal, all that he had lost during the previous forty-eight hours of expulsive agony, and a continuous procession of stewards could hardly keep pace with his crapulent demands.

That night, glittering low on the horizon, I saw, for the first time, the Southern Cross, those four bright stars of the Southern hemisphere placed as if at the extremities of a Latin cross, which, for Northerners, carry with them all the magic and allure of the South Seas. Just a little disappointing at first, perhaps, because the cross formation is not very easy to recognize until one becomes used to it—but nevertheless and notwithstanding . . . the Southern Cross . . . beckoning. . . .

It is six hundred and thirty miles from Hong-Kong to Manila, and, at six o'clock on the Monday morning, in the half light of a tropic dawn, the *Yuen-san*, shaking down her bedraggled skirts and swallowing her smoke, passed primly through *Pona Chita*, the narrow gateway that gives access to the historic Bay of Manila. The jagged summits of the mountains of the interior stood up like a black cardboard cut-out against the pearly tints of the daybreak, and, as we rippled down the harbour, the sun, a glowing disc of fire, rose swiftly above the mountain barrier and touched with its golden fingers the massive dome of the cathedral and the maze of glistening roofs that clustered about it.

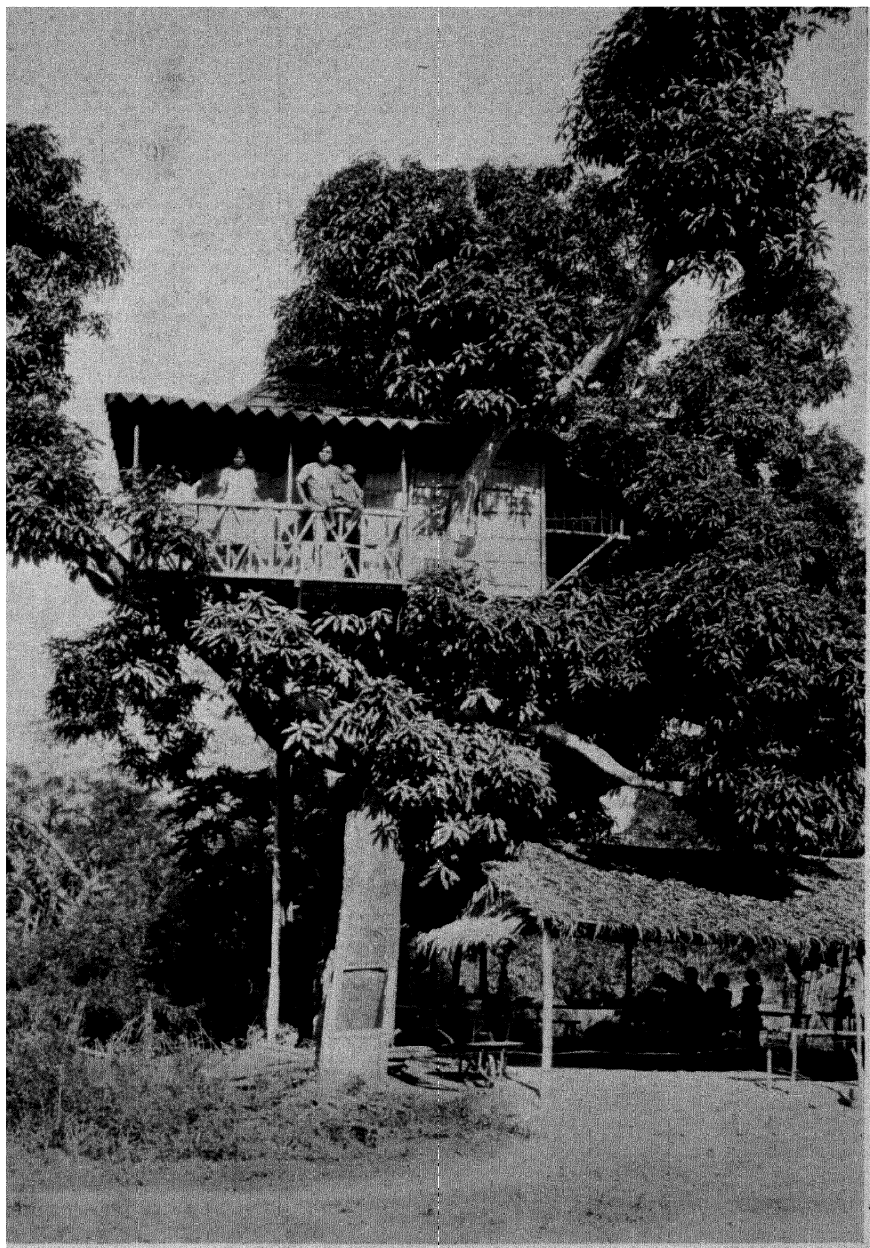
Magellan, the adventurous Spaniard, first set foot in the Philippines in 1521, and they were named for Philip II of Spain. Spanish the Islands remained for over three hundred years until, in 1898, after the Spanish-American War, they passed into the possession of the United States. There are some seven thousand islands in the group, and more than six thousand of them measure less than one square mile in area. Luzon, in the north, with an area of 40,814 square miles, is the largest and Mindanao, at the southern end, with its 36,906 square miles of territory, comes next in size.

Leaning over the rail, we watched the approach of the launch bearing the white-clad doctor, and subsequently, our bill of health being satisfactory, the business of drawing alongside the wharf.

My first impression was one of heat—heat pressing down like a smothering blanket, so that, even when stand-

ing still, the perspiration started out of every pore, for the breeze of the steamer's movement had ceased and not a breath of wind stirred the pearl-grey waters of the bay.

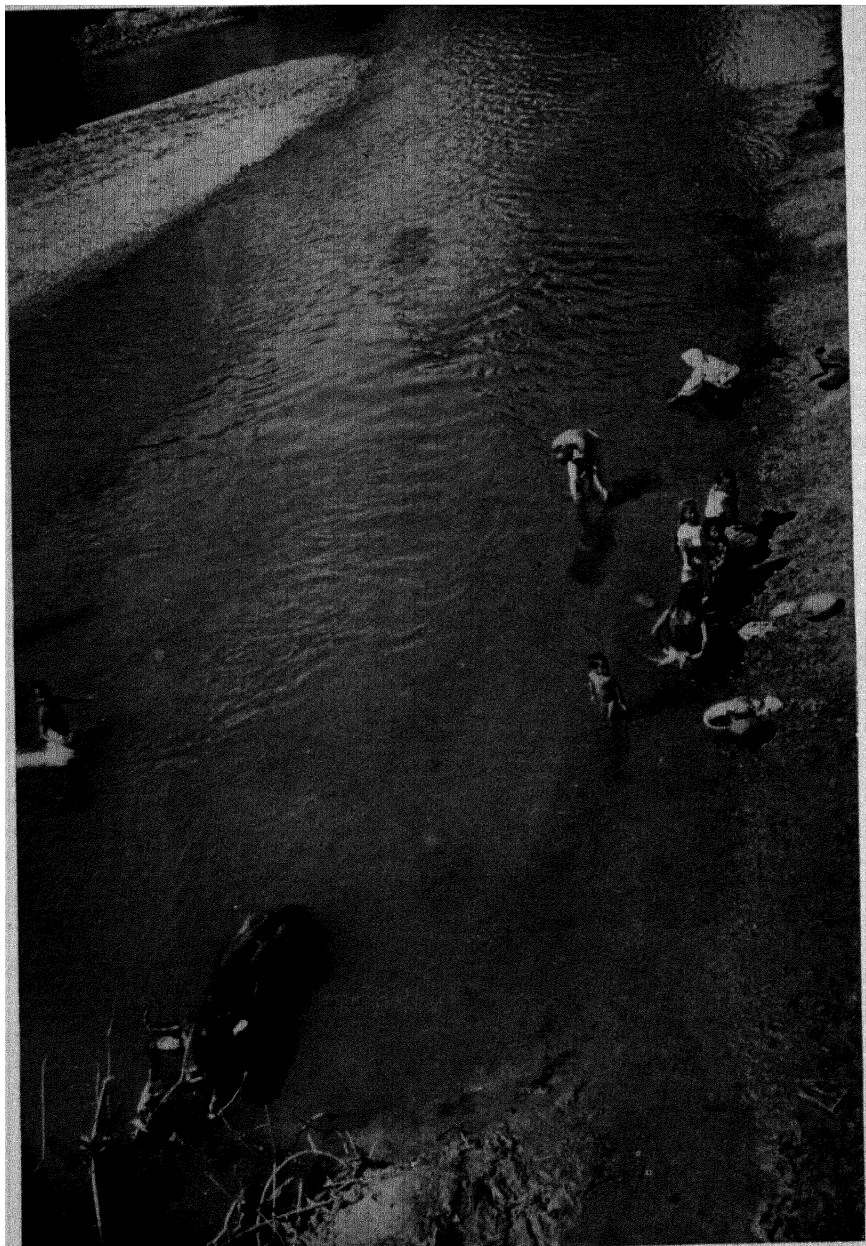
The Customs shed lay just across the narrow wharf, and, our baggage having been dumped on the long wooden table, I regret to say that our entry into the Philippine Islands was nearly marred at the very outset by a free fight between George and an insolent Filipino Customs official. And I don't blame George, either, for the arrogant rudeness of these dagoes was very hard to stomach. The Americans, with high-minded but mistaken altruism, have given over to the Filipinos much of the government and official administration of the Group in the attempt to apply the shibboleths of "democracy" and "freedom" to a tropical people who neither understand nor appreciate such so-called benefits. Unaccustomed to colonization and actuated by high-falutin sentiment and schoolmarm theories, the American rulers, in spite of the admitted increase of wealth and health which their occupation of the Group has brought, have only succeeded in earning the hatred and contempt of Filipino politicians, and this attitude of mind of the native officials towards white men was very evident during the examination of our baggage—so much so, indeed, that George, who, like most Englishmen, has his own ideas of this "little brown brother" business, resented it very strongly. So did I. Special efforts apparently were being made to discover and prevent the smuggling in of drugs, and, in spite of my denials that nothing of the sort was concealed within my camera, my particular dago snatched my Kodak from my hands and removed the back of it to search the interior—thereby, of course, ruining a roll of films. George's official went further than that. He made as if to search George himself. But this was altogether too much for my friend's equanimity, and, looking down upon the nasty little jack-in-office, he grimly informed him that if he so much as laid a finger on him, he, George, would fell him. Matters were thus at a deadlock and had commenced to look serious,



MANILA.

"... and even in the branches of trees."

(see page 241)



PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

" . . . we caught glimpses of water-buffaloes—wallowing."

(see page 248)

when Shuster, our friend of the *Sphinx*, most opportunely appeared on the scene and managed to smooth things down. It was not, however, the happiest of introductions to the islands which their Spanish discoverers named "Pearl of the Orient".

Shuster had a car waiting and quickly transported us through the awakening streets to the Manila Hotel, where Mr. Butz, the manager, had prepared a room for our occupation—a spacious apartment with a bare polished floor, two beds, and a large, three-bladed wooden fan which flopped round slowly in the middle of the ceiling. As in all large hotels in the tropics, there were scores of "boys"—white-clad servants—who hung about the passages and squatted outside the bedroom doors, ready to give instant service at a clap of the hands. George and I, donning kimonos, were led to the shower-baths, after which we donned, for the first time, our suits of white linen. These we had had made for us in Hong-Kong by a Chinese tailor, to whom we had each supplied an English-made lounge suit as a pattern. A Chinese tailor hardly ever measures you for clothes, but copies, with an exactitude that is amazing, and sometimes embarrassing, any garment you may hand him for that purpose.

It was terribly hot, and both of us were wet through with perspiration even before we had finished dressing. The thermometer only stood at 85°, but the humidity was so great that it seemed much hotter. Not only so, but the sudden change from the comparative coolness of China and the fresh northerly breezes of the monsoon was too abrupt for our present comfort.

After tiffin Shuster took us for a run round Manila, a city presenting an extraordinary mingling of three separate and distinct civilizations. There is the modern section with paved streets and up-to-date buildings; the Intramuros, or walled city, reminiscent of Old Spain, with its moated walls and drawbridges giving entrance through five great gates; and, lastly, the native section, its houses roofed with the leaves of the *nipa* palm and built on high stilts or even in the branches of trees. Here at last were the

real tropics. The market-place was a riot of colour—vegetables piled up on large round trays, and luscious tropical fruits—mangoes, mangosteens, *chico* and *lanzons*. Flowers, too, in the most lavish profusion—jasmine, *cham-paca* and the *dama de noche* (lady of the night), which, when darkness has fallen, gives off the sweetest of scents.

The native costume of the Filipino women is one of the most picturesque that it is possible to imagine—a black or, more often, a brightly-coloured skirt of cotton gauze—raised coquettishly at one side to show a frilly white underskirt—and a blouse of the same material, cut low at the neck and with short but very wide gauzy sleeves held out from the upper arms on wire frames. No hat covers the carefully combed and “bunned” black hair, and only sandals are worn on the slender brown feet.

Not only the Filipino men, but also many of the women and girls, and children too, were smoking cigars, and Shuster said that if we entered one of the native homes we should probably find a long, fat family cigar hanging by a string, ready for any member of the household to take a “pull” at when they felt so inclined.

Speeding in the car was impossible, for, apart from the swarms of brown-skinned and black-eyed children, clad in nothing at all or at most in a very short shirt, the roads were full of strangely mixed traffic: *carrametas* and *calesas*—two-wheeled pony-drawn traps with canvas hoods and a single seat for the driver perched almost on the knees of the two passengers—and, straying all over the place and moving at an incredibly slow pace, the springless two-wheeled carts drawn by carabao bulls—water buffaloes. Nothing disturbs the slow serenity of the carabao. No power on earth can hurry him, and many times during the course of our afternoon ride we made one of a number of automobiles, honking madly and crawling at a snail’s pace, behind a placid peasant sitting, half asleep, on a cart moving at the rate of half a mile an hour, and drawn by one of these great grey water buffaloes. The placid and slow-moving carabao is symbolical of the Islands before the American occupation, just as the impatient motor-

car, impeded and exasperated, typifies the hectic, get-a-move-on American influence.

There is something grand and stately in the movement of these buffaloes. As tall as prize bulls, very thick and stocky, they are covered with short elephant-grey hair, and their terrifying horns, often from four to five feet across, are heavily seamed and ridged. They have a way of slowly turning their heads from side to side and licking their pink noses as they plod along gazing mournfully out of their watery eyes. Unless they get their daily mud-bath they are inclined to become savage and unmanageable, and, in fact, in their wild state—for thus they are still to be found in many parts of Luzon—they are vicious fighters and formidable antagonists. They are generally feared by grown-ups, but even the most truculent of the domesticated type respond meekly to the orders of a naked brown infant. In the Philippines, as also in Java, the carabaos are the special wards of the children, and, on our subsequent excursions into the interior, one of the commonest road scenes was that of these great beasts being driven to the river or to some mud-hole by naked youngsters riding astride on their broad backs and hammering a tattoo on their thick-skinned flanks with little bare heels.

George and I both wanted to do some shopping—to buy silk socks and a shirt or two—and here, of course, we came up against yet another fresh currency. The Americans have continued the use of the Spanish coins, but have put them on a gold standard basis and linked them with their own currency. Thus the *peso*, worth fifty cents American, roughly two shillings at par, is a silver coin, and is equal to one hundred *centavos*. The *peseta*, which contains twenty *centavos*, is also a silver coin, and is worth, approximately, fivepence, whilst the nickel five-*centavo* piece is equivalent to about one penny-farthing of our money.

Shuster took us to a Chinese shop in the main street—for practically the whole of the retail trade in the Philippines is in the hands of the Chinese—and here George bought a silk kimono dressing-gown for P18, together

with a wonderful pleated soft silk shirt which he insisted on wearing that same night with his dinner-jacket.

We dined at the hotel with quite a large party, all of them friends of Shuster, and one of them, a man named Ovens, recently of the British Consulate in Honolulu and a late fellow passenger of ours on the *Nippon Maru*. Tall, thin, languid and acclimatized to the tropics, even the sweltering heat of the dining-room left him cool and unruffled—to the envy of George and myself, whose starched collars collapsed at a very early stage. After a somewhat hilarious meal we climbed into a couple of cars and were driven to Santa Ana, one of the dance-halls famous in Manila. Alighting beneath a pillared portico, we entered a spacious and lofty hall brilliantly lighted with thousands of coloured electric lamps, the broad expanse of polished floor being divided across the centre by a series of illuminated arches. One half was reserved for Filipinos and the other for Americans. All round the edges of the floor were groups of tables and chairs, and two magnificent bands played alternately and continuously.

In one corner of the half reserved for our use was a wooden enclosure occupied by Filipino girls—their brightly-coloured evening gowns contrasting strangely against their dark skins—and presided over by an older woman who sat before a ticket machine. When one wished to dance one went over to the enclosure and bought a ticket for twenty *centavos*—George bought five for a *peso*—bowed to a nice-looking wench, danced with her, and, when the music stopped, returned her to the “pen” and gave her the ticket. The whole thing was quite impersonal, but none the less enjoyable on that account. Incidentally, the Eighteenth Amendment has not been foisted upon the Filipinos by the Americans, and therefore all kinds of that bottled dynamite which is such a useful adjunct to temporary gaiety were available.

The Filipino half of the floor was crowded with dancers, and I noticed that whenever I and my partner approached closely to the dividing arches, glances were cast at us and muttered remarks made by the swarthy men, which, from

the lowering facial expressions of the speakers, I judged to be very far from complimentary. When I mentioned the fact to Shuster he frankly admitted that the feelings of hostility between the Americans and the Filipinos were, at that moment, very marked, and, in consequence, he begged that both George and I would conduct ourselves with the greatest circumspection.

Having danced with all the best-looking girls—who, in spite of their charms, were decidedly sullen—we went along to Lerma Park, another dance-hall of the same kind, where similar conditions prevailed. It was all quite good fun, but the heat was so appalling that at about one a.m. we called it a day and returned to the hotel.

The next morning we breakfasted in our room clad in nothing more elaborate than a towel apiece, and, even so, felt too hot. After tiffin at "The Poodle Dog", a favourite haunt of Shuster's, we went for a long run to San Fernando, a small town lying on the main road to the north of Manila. The way led through old Spanish settlements with thick stone walls still standing, although in ruinous condition, past ancient Spanish churches—long, low buildings with arrow-slit windows and curious pagoda-like towers—and through native villages of *nipa* huts built up on stilts—the space beneath being used as a stable for carabao bulls and for poultry—set amidst banana plants and the slender stems of coconut palms. This was my first introduction to coconut palms, and I little thought, as I gazed at them, that within the twelvemonth I should be running a coconut plantation of my own on an island in the Southern Pacific.

Naked brown children waved and shouted; pigs, long-snouted and grey-black in colour, rooting in the road, squealed with alarm as our impatient wheels shaved past their twitching tails, and hens, taken unawares, squawked madly and sprang to safety. The only occupant of the road with which we could take no liberties at all was the carabao, whose massive bulk and menacing spread of horn brought us, on many occasions, to a sudden and brake-squealing halt.

The country north of Manila was dead flat—although one solitary cone-shaped hill, an extinct volcano, rose abruptly from the plain—and away in the distance, a misty blue, appeared the mighty range of mountains into which, on the morrow, Shuster intended to take us. As we hummed along the shadeless roads of the plain we passed many fields of sugar-cane, of corn, and of tobacco-plants, though most of the cultivated land we saw was devoted to the growing of rice. In other parts of this northern island, but more particularly in Mindanao to the south, there are vast coconut plantations; coffee, tea and cocoa is grown; and Manila hemp, which is an essential ingredient in binder-twine and made from the fibre of a species of banana, is produced in such quantities as to make the Philippines the world's largest exporter of this commodity.

Being our first introduction to the life of the tropics, I was fascinated by all I saw, and almost sorry when we arrived back at the hotel just in time to have a shower and change before dining in the spacious room, whose ceiling presented a whirling maze of large wooden-bladed fans.

We went to bed in good time that night in preparation for a very early start on the morrow, which, as it happened, was the twenty-fourth of December, Christmas Eve. Shuster had suggested that we might like to spend Christmas Day up in the mountains at Baguio, the summer capital, and the prospect of the cooler air of the hills appealed immensely to us both.

According to plan, therefore, George and I arose in the dark at three-thirty a.m., and at four o'clock we were all ready to start. But here a serious hitch occurred. Shuster had engaged a chauffeur to drive the car, and he turned up to say that he couldn't come. No explanations; just a bald statement. Not any persuasion or recrimination on the part of Shuster had the slightest effect on the man's mulish obstinacy, nor would he make any helpful suggestion as to a substitute. Shuster cursed and swore and blasphemed with rather more than his customary vehemence and set forth at last to find another driver, whilst George and I sat and waited in the car.

All about us was the warm darkness of the tropic night, and above us that "black inverted bowl we call the sky" was encrusted with myriads of stars—not mildly twinkling as in northern latitudes, but stabbing and flashing and scintillating with a hard, prismatic brilliance. Near at hand, in the trees and bushes of the hotel garden, it almost seemed as if hundreds of little baby stars had become entangled amidst their branches, for their depths were all aglow with the tiny pulsing lamps of the fireflies.

Shuster, with his snarling obscenities, had departed hence and a hush overlay all the land—the pregnant hush that comes before the miracle of the dawn. Presently a faint glow manifested itself on the eastern horizon—so vague as to be no more than a dim suggestion—but slowly and imperceptibly the nebulous glimmer grew into a definite effulgence until, abruptly, a golden pencil of light shot athwart the paling sky and grew into a quivering spear of radiance. It was as though a furnace door were opened. . . .

Swiftly now the transformation developed. As the glowing ball of the sun rose behind the serrated barrier of the distant mountains every peak and every ridge was outlined in fire, whilst between the summits, and down through the mysterious purple gorges, tendrils of light felt their cautious way. Slowly their glory filtered down into the sleeping shadows of the plain, the habitations of men took shape out of the gloom, and suddenly, above us, the pillared and windowed façade of the hotel was flooded with golden light . . . and it was day.

At seven o'clock Shuster returned, still calling upon his long-suffering Maker, but leading a likely-looking lad named Segundo whom he had secured as chauffeur. Leaving the new driver in charge of the car we all three hurriedly repaired to an all-night café bearing the prosaic name of "The Gas Kitchen", where, in the coolness of the morning and the company of early risers mingled with a few late and partially deflated night-revellers, we thoroughly enjoyed a rousing breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast and coffee.

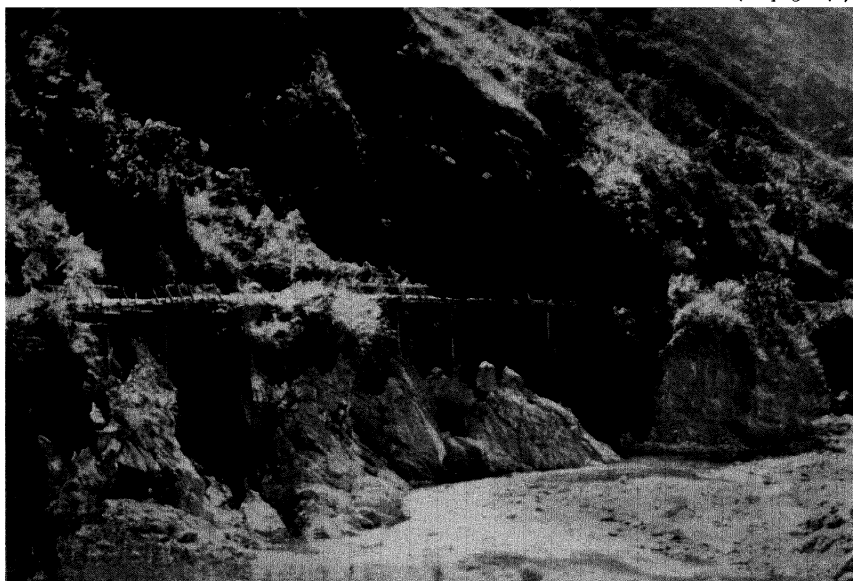
We got away in the car, a six-cylinder Hudson, just before eight o'clock, and for the first fifty miles or so travelled along the same road as that we had taken to San Fernando. Because of the absence of traffic due to the earliness of the hour we made very much better speed than on the previous day, and in not much more than an hour and a half we had reached and passed the little town and were bowling along the North Road amidst new country. As the morning advanced, so the difficulty of our progress increased, for not only did traffic begin to encumber the road, but our passage through the villages was more and more obstructed by the usual collection of hollow-backed pigs with pendulous paunches, by naked, brown-skinned piccaninnies playing "last across", by feather-shedding poultry and by slinking cur-dogs. Mule or pony-drawn *calesas* zigzagged along the highway, an infrequent motor-bus, crammed to capacity with brightly-garbed natives, tipped alarmingly as it roared past on the camber in a cloud of dust, and the ubiquitous carabao, mouching along with wide-spreading horns, blocked our progress twenty times in the hour. Rice-fields alternated with coconut palm and banana plantations, whilst now and again the land dropped away to the bed of a sluggish and shallow river, spanned by a concrete bridge from which we caught glimpses of water buffaloes, attended by naked urchins, wallowing, nostril-deep, in the muddy stream.

At a village named Cabantuan we stopped for lunch and to obtain petrol, oil, and water. Apparently there was something amiss with the water-circulating system of the car, for during the last few miles a jet of steam had been hissing from the radiator cap. However, during our stop for lunch, Segundo, who, for some reason, wore a Turkish fez, filled up with cold water and made some adjustments which improved matters, at least temporarily. Shuster and George and I found a restaurant in the main street, and, commandeering an upstairs room, lunched very well indeed on soup—species unknown and not enquired into—goats' flesh stew, chicken, some kind of pudding, a spoonful of crimson cassava jelly, and last, but not



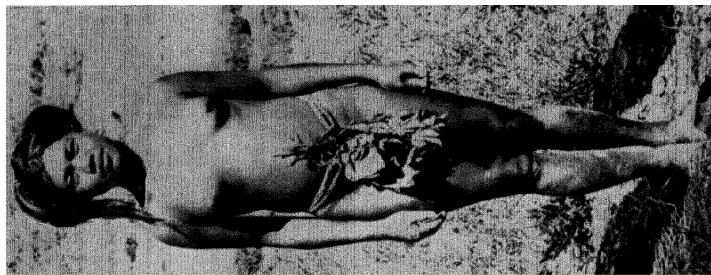
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.
" . . . the carabao . . . with wide-spreading horns."

(see page 248)



" . . . terraces supported on brackets from the cliff side."

(see page 250)



" . . . an Igorot. . . ."

(see page 254)



PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

" . . . the rounded summits of tumbled mountains."

(see page 254)

least, "doble Bock Beers"—all quite good and very satisfying.

All afternoon we bowled steadily along the level road, from time to time passing through *nipa* villages and small white-walled Spanish-looking townlets with brown-skinned women, bearing pitchers, gossiping round the communal pump. Most of these women in the country districts went bare-legged and bare-footed and wore a loose one-piece garment made of *pina*, a cloth woven from pineapple fibre. But always their glossy black hair was well cared for, being combed and brushed back neatly from their shining brown foreheads. There was hardly any suggestion at all of the negro about their features, which were regular, and, in many cases, distinctly pretty.

Nearer and nearer we approached to the mountains whose foothills and ravines rose abruptly from the flat level of the plain, until, as the sun was setting, we reached Alava and encountered the first gate that barred access to the controlled road which led upwards into the high hills. Beyond this point, so precipitous is the route, the road frequently narrows to a single track, and, in order to avoid the dangerous possibility of two cars meeting, it has been divided into sections, controlled by gates linked by telephone, in which only cars travelling in the same direction are allowed.

A small refreshment booth, built of bamboo poles and *nipa* leaves, was situated just outside the gate, and here, as the shadows of evening fell, the three of us washed the dust from our parched throats with libations of beer. If I had known that Shuster intended to take over the wheel during the final eighteen miles of hazardous mountain-climbing, I should certainly not have suggested that last bottle, but, never dreaming that such was his intention, I actually pressed it upon him.

However, we took our seats—Shuster now at the wheel—the gate swung open and we rolled forward towards the ascent. So long as I live I shall never forget that night ride up the Benguet Road from Alava to Baguio. Setting his teeth and snarling with grim determination, Shuster

set himself to do the trip in record time. The swift darkness of the tropic night had fallen, and the only light was that given by our blazing headlights, as we roared, on second gear, up the narrow ribbon of road. Following the snakelike twistings of the climbing track, at one moment the glare of our lamps showed like two discs of light on the face of a wall of rock that fronted us, and, at the next, as Shuster, with clenched jaws and muttered imprecations, wrenched the wheel over, the twin beams shot out into space over the edge of a precipice, and only the feeble glow of the sidelights were left to illuminate the curvature of the cliff face and the succeeding bend of the road. With the roar of our exhaust echoing from the walls of narrow and invisible valleys we screamed ever upwards, winding round rocky escarpments with unimagined depths now on one side and now on the other, rumbling suddenly over clattering plank bridges with the foam of a racing torrent dimly luminous below, and skidding along wooden terraces which were supported on brackets from the cliff-side and slimy with the spray of thundering waterfalls unseen in the darkness.

At the end of every control we slowed up and halted, with boiling radiator, in the glow of an oil-lamp, until the swing-bar was raised and the "All clear" signal given for the next section of the climb. And, waiting there in the sudden hush of our brief pause, I looked up at the shining host of stars, and, in their austere glitter, I seemed to read a cold contempt.

At a quarter past eight we ran smoothly beneath the portico of the Hotel Pines at Baguio, and, to me at least, the spacious lounge, floored, walled and ceilinged with polished pine, strewn with handsome rugs and furnished with plenty of comfortable-looking armchairs, was a very welcome sight. And not less so was the big fire of logs which crackled and glowed so cheerfully within the great brick fireplace, for at this elevation of five thousand feet the night air was positively nippy—the temperature being at least 25° lower than that of the sweltering plains from which we had come.

The room was full of a merry company of guests, all of whom, men and women alike, were wearing ridiculous paper caps, and, what with the jolly crowd and the panelled walls and the flickering log fire, the whole atmosphere was that of an old-fashioned Christmas in England.

All that was lacking was a spot of snow, a robin red-breast, and the sound of carols sung by a troupe of blue-nosed waits.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

BAGUIO AND ZAMBOANGA

BAGUIO is to the northern Philippines what Simla is to north-western India—a hill station and mountain resort where the exhausted bodies and jangled nerves of those who dwell in the furnace-heat of the lowlands can find relief in the delightful coolness and the bracing air of the hills.

The town is like an American summer resort in appearance, with wooden hotels and cottages, and even occasional log-cabins, and it lies in the heart of a lovely pine country on the top of a range of mountains varying in height from four to seven thousand feet. The thermometer rarely goes above 75° during the day, and in the evening everyone lights wood fires. The rolling hills, often wreathed in filmy clouds, are covered with short grass, and enormous pine trees, standing singly or in groups, are one of the most striking features of the landscape.

When I awakened on the morrow of our arrival I felt as fit as a fiddle. Gone was the lethargy due to the relentless heat of the plains. The cool air, redolent with the tonic scent of pine-cones, was as clear as crystal, and, plainly visible from my bedroom window, mountain peaks fully fifty miles away stood out with cameo-like sharpness.

Suddenly, outside my bedroom door, I heard the voice of George raised in song :

“I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Yee-ar,

A cellar full—as you were !—A pocket full of money and a cellar
full of beer,

And a gurt fat pig to last you all t'ye-ar !”

and there followed immediately a thunderous rat-tat-tat on the panels.

"I prefer the 'cellar full of money', George," I said, as he entered. "Merry Christmas, you big stiff. How are you?"

"Full of beans," he cried. "Let's go and sing 'Christians Awake' outside Shuster's door."

"What's the good?" I replied. "Shuster's no Christian."

Upon even Shuster, however, the purifying air seemed already to have worked a miracle, for when we met him downstairs for breakfast quite half the meal elapsed before blasphemy soiled his lips.

Afterwards, Segundo brought the car round and we went for a run. Baguio has now become the summer capital of the Governor-General and the seat of administration during the hot months, in spite of the bitter opposition of the Filipinos, who, realizing that the recuperative atmosphere of this hill-station makes it possible for Americans to remain longer in the Group, did all they could to cut off the financial appropriation required for the transfer of the machinery of government each year. Anything, in fact, that tends to make the Americans more comfortable is anathema to the Filipino politicians, and, therefore, to be strenuously opposed. Precisely as is the case in India, what the native politicians, an unrepresentative handful, are after is complete independence—not for the good of all the people, irrespective of race, but in furtherance of their own self-seeking and partisan purposes.

There are something like eleven thousand American troops in the Philippines, including six Filipino regiments, and in Baguio there has been constructed a large army post, named Camp John Hay, whose parade-ground and officers' quarters, bowered in purple bougainvillea and climbing roses, we skirted during our morning drive. We saw, too, that unique feature of the place, the open-air amphitheatre, capable of seating four thousand people and possessing such extraordinary acoustic properties that even a whisper is plainly audible to every member of the audience.

Near the hotel, just before tiffin, I made my first acquaintance with a native clad solely in the gee-string of tropical fiction. One reads of naked savages in breech-clouts, but one's first encounter with the reality in the flesh is somewhat startling, and, even if not an outstanding historical event, is at least a fit and proper subject for photographic record.

The man was an Igorot native, a tribe of Malayan origin inhabiting the mountainous region of Bontoc just north of Baguio, and a people who were, until quite recently, wild, warlike, and addicted to head-hunting. Less than thirty years ago each Igorot village kept a careful profit and loss account of heads with every village of its enemies.

The Igorot I encountered was a sturdy specimen, stockily built, shock-haired and almost black-skinned, with features of a somewhat Mongolian cast, and wearing, as his sole garment, a strip of cloth encircling his waist and passed between the legs. I took a photograph of him standing stiffly to attention under the noonday sun, and, like most of my pictures, it turned out well, in spite of the sudden fear I had when the negative was "coming up" in the developing tray. For, in startling contrast to the white path on which he was standing, a black blob, like a pool of ink—the colours reversed in the negative, of course—showed all round his feet, and it was only when I made a print that I realized this was merely his shadow, squat and shapeless, cast straight downwards by the sun which stood almost vertically overhead. During my subsequent six years' sojourn in the Solomon Islands, all such tropical phenomena—including naked head-hunters and cannibals—became matters of commonplace, but trivial though it is, I note the fact here as being something that was new and interesting to me at that time.

After tiffin we motored to the Meteorological Observatory, perched upon the highest peak of all, and, beyond the rounded summit of scores of tumbled mountains, we glimpsed, far away, the blue waters of the South China Sea. Coasting from this eminence down the Naguilan Road,

every turn of the track revealed a wonderful panorama of rolling hills and mountain scenery, wreathed about with wisps of vaporous white cloud through which we ourselves passed from time to time as we roared up and down the switchback gradients. Within the Country Club, where we pulled up later, all was Yuletide gaiety, and, although plenty of coffee-coloured boy caddies, wearing very short shirts, waited hopefully without, most of the members on this particular day seemed to prefer the amenities of the club-house to the attractions of the golf-course.

Here Shuster, drawing George apart, talked confidentially with him about his prospective gold-mine, the site of which lay not many miles away in the hills, but, if he had only known it, his chances of interesting us had vanished long ago—on personal grounds if on no other. Shuster's manners and personality might be acceptable to his fellow Americans, but neither George nor I cared for them. Not to mention his foul tongue, he was altogether too didactic and intolerant of any opinion that differed from his own. We had insisted from the outset upon paying all expenses and, apart from his services as a guide, we felt ourselves to be in no sense under any obligation to him.

I don't know what brought the subject up, but at dinner that night—which consisted of turkey, plum pudding and mince pies, with all the traditional Christmas trimmings—he presumed to criticize, in a very violent and provocative manner, the policy of Great Britain towards Ireland. I am no authority myself on this question, but all the same, I wasn't going to let a half-educated American "shoot off his mouth" about it without protest. I protested, therefore, with some heat, and at considerable length.

It was the first occasion on which either of us had troubled to disagree with Shuster, although the provocations had been many, and the effect of my outburst was as comical as it was unexpected. First he gaped with astonishment, then he sulked, and finally, rising from the table in a huff, he went straight upstairs to bed! A queer type.

When morning came, however, he seemed to have forgotten all about it, and cursed Segundo with his usual fluency when that long-suffering individual brought the car round all filled up with oil and petrol, ready to take us back to Manila. Incidentally, by this time I had come to understand why the first chauffeur had declined to come with us, and also why Americans—of Shuster's type, at any rate—were so thoroughly hated by the Filipinos.

We got away at nine-fifteen, and, coasting on our brakes nearly all the way, retraced our route down the same Benguet Road up which Shuster, full of beer, had driven us so recklessly. And the more I saw of that road, the more I marvelled at our temerity in roaring up it at speed in the pitch-dark on Christmas Eve, and, too, at our wonderful luck in having negotiated it safely. A marvellous road, at every turn it disclosed for us new and impressive vistas of lofty mountains, rushing streams, rocky canyons and deep, boulder-strewn gorges. In places the track crept round the face of a precipice with the bare hewn rock towering up on the one hand, and, on the other, a sheer drop of hundreds of feet to the bed of a tumbling torrent, whilst at one point, known as the "Zig-Zag", the road, like a spiral spring, curled in a succession of alarming hairpin bends down the side of a tremendous valley.

Once we met five or six natives, each leading on leashes about a dozen dogs of all sizes, shapes and ancestry. These dogs, I learnt from Shuster, were employed for the hunting of deer, which they chase into wide-spreading nets where the wealthy Filipino "sportsmen"—save the mark!—spear them to death with lances.

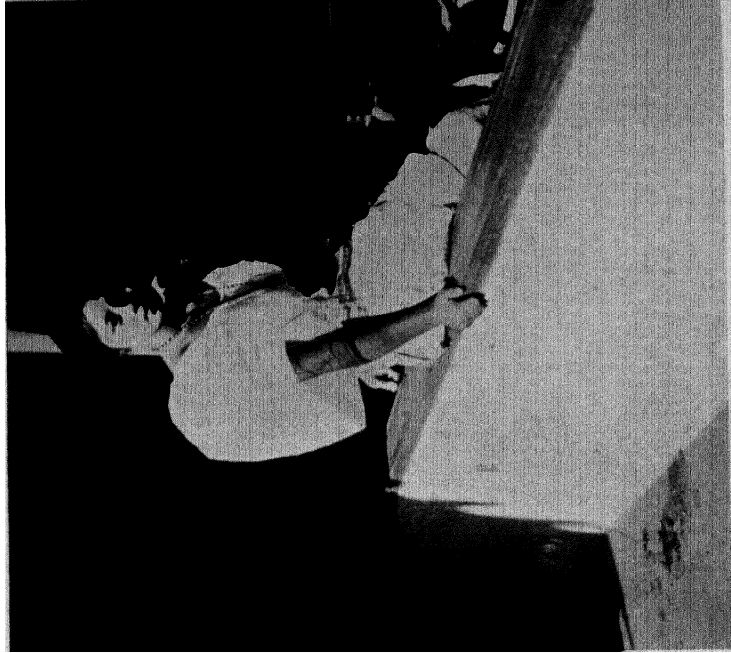
Dropping down through one control after another—they are named "Camps", and are numbered "Camp One", "Camp Two", and so on—we reached the foothills in about an hour, and, passing through the final gate, met, like a blast from an open furnace, the sweltering heat of the plains.

As we sped along over the hot and dusty road it very soon became evident that there was still something wrong with the circulation pump, for the radiator boiled like a



"These dogs were employed to hunt deer."

(see page 256)



"... a Filipino girl . . . Maria de Vera."

(see page 257)

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.



PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

"In the shallows were naked children, splashing about."

(see page 257)

kettle. In consequence, and at intervals of every ten miles or so, we had to stop and fill up afresh with water. Luckily for us the road crossed many streams and rivers, and, with the aid of a petrol tin, we were able to satisfy the car's insatiable thirst. In the shallows of every stream were women washing clothes or bathing, naked children shouting and splashing about, and at least one carabao soaking his hide in the cooling waters. For the most part the bridges were of reinforced concrete, but a collapsible one that spanned a shallow stream with an exceptionally wide bed took my interest because of its ingenuity. Normally, a stream such as this would be quite narrow, but apparently, during the wet season—from July to October—it was liable to flooding, thus becoming a wide and swift-flowing river. A series of pile supports spanned the bed of the stream, and laid upon them was a single-track roadway built of stout wooden beams bolted together. This roadway was not fastened down to the supporting piles in any way, but was attached to the bank by a strong wire cable, with the result that, when the floods come and the river rises, instead of presenting a solid barrier to the torrent, it floats off and swings aside, being quite easily replaced when the waters subside.

We lunched at a small restaurant in a native village where, rather than risk the Filipino fare, which looked somewhat dubious, we first purchased the items of our repast—corned beef and tinned peaches—in the shop downstairs. These, served with fried onions and boiled potatoes, made a sufficiently satisfying meal.

Now on our outward trip we had chanced to pass through a little place named Marilau, where, under the blazing sun, the shaded coolness of a certain café displaying a large placard bidding all and sundry to "DRINK ICE-COLD BEER" had tempted us to pull up for a thirst-quencher. And here we had been served by an extremely pretty Filipino girl bearing the attractive name of Maria de Vera, to whose charms George had promptly fallen a victim. On our return journey, therefore, George kept reminding Segundo that on no account must he forget to stop at the café in

Marilau, and hence, in due course, the car slowed to a standstill beside the knee-high concrete wall that separated its cool, tile-paved verandah from the blinding white road.

We lingered here only a short while, but apparently quite long enough for George to succeed in persuading Maria to come and dance with him that same evening at Lerma Park, and when we set forth again it was with George hanging half out of the car waving fervent *au revoirs* to the equally enthusiastic lady.

Although the distance from Baguio to Manila is only about 160 miles, what with one delay and another, including a puncture, it was seven forty-five p.m. before the wheels of our car crunched to a halt on the gravel drive of the Manila Hotel, and nearly half past nine before George, frantic with impatience, hustled me into the dance-hall at Lerma Park. But Maria, looking most charming, was waiting for him just inside the entrance, and for the remainder of the evening, as the village reporter puts it, "a very pleasant time was had by all".

This was our last night in Manila, for, fired with the desire to extend our acquaintance with head-hunters and with primitive conditions of life generally, we had decided to make our way next to Port Moresby, in New Guinea. Enquiry at the shipping offices had elicited the information that no steamer line ran direct to Port Moresby from Manila, but that it might be possible to make a connection from Thursday Island. Following up this suggestion, we found that the *Tango Maru*, a Nippon Yusen Kaisha liner, *en route* for Sydney and calling at Thursday Island on the way, was due to arrive in Manila Bay on the morrow, and we had thereupon booked a two-berth cabin on her, by wireless, through the agents.

The next morning, therefore, was spent in packing and in last-minute shopping, and at noon Shuster drove us down to the wharf and saw us safely on board. In many ways we were sorry to have to say good-bye to him—he had given us a good deal of his time and shown us much that otherwise we should not have seen. He wasn't a bad sort, either; it was just that, for the nonce, at any

rate, we were absolutely surfeited with American back-slapping familiarity, American brag and boost, American modes of expression and American nose-talk. But when you are bidding adieu to a person whom in all probability you will never see again, you sink all differences and remember only the pleasant things, and so it was with a feeling of genuine regret that we leaned over the rail and waved farewell to Shuster's rapidly diminishing white-clad figure as the engine telegraphs clanged and the *Tango Maru*, swinging away from the wharf, gathered speed down Manila Bay.

The position of voyagers who embark on long-distance vessels at intermediate ports is always rather a forlorn one just at first, for the reason that the longer established passengers have already coalesced into groups and cliques, and are in no hurry to welcome newcomers into their circle. It was therefore with feelings not unlike those of a couple of strange kids at a Christmas party that George and I wandered about the great decks on that first day as the *Tango Maru*, steaming down the China Sea, steered a course due south for Zamboango on Mindanao, the southernmost island of the group.

Sheltered by the Islands, we travelled in smooth water, although the monsoon was still blowing hard and beyond the hills the great seas were rolling in upon the eastern coastline. Over there lay the Philippine Deep, where the sea-bed drops sheer to depths so profound that were the loftiest mountain in the world—Mount Everest, 29,000 feet high—to be sunk beneath the surface, its topmost summit would still lie nearly 3,000 feet below the waves. With soundings of 31,614 feet, this portion of the Pacific Ocean furnishes the greatest depth known to marine surveyors.

In spite of the breeze-creating movement of the vessel it was appallingly hot, and in our cabin the whirring fan only succeeded in producing a blast of hot air like that which issues from a barber's electric hair-dryer.

The next day found us in the sheltered waters of the

Sulu Sea, surrounded on three sides by the islands of the Philippine group, and on the fourth, the south-west, by British North Borneo. The sea was like a sheet of pearl-grey glass, and from beneath our steadily advancing stem there spurted a constant stream of flying-fish which sped away, like skimming-stones, across the level surface.

A fair-sized swimming-bath had been erected on the lower deck up forward, and it was in the informal atmosphere of its confined waters that we came to know the English passengers. It is not possible to maintain an icy reserve when you dive into the tank and someone, in the general confusion, treads on your face. There were about eighteen British passengers aboard, but the particular coterie we chummed up with more particularly consisted of five persons—young Nathan of Glaxo fame; Dick Norton, a theatrical; Miss Ritchie, an Australian girl; and the Misses Coke, two maiden ladies of uncertain age. All the others were a decent and very jolly crowd too—including a wiry little Jew named Ornstein with an astounding capacity for beer—with the exception, however, of one extraordinary gentleman, blue-jowled and saturnine of visage, who called himself a Bishop and dressed as such, but whose over-emphasized ecclesiastical trappings and elaborate “jewels” produced an effect both theatrical and unconvincing. The name of his “Church” certainly had the word “Catholic” in it, but the general opinion was that he had first made himself up as a “Bishop” and then invented a “Church” to be the Bishop of—precisely as, in later years, a Solomon Island native to whom I sold a brass-mounted double bedstead which was too large to go into his leaf hut, placed the thing on the open ground and built a house round about it.

That evening there was an extraordinary phenomenon in the sky, the like of which I have never seen before or since. In the late afternoon I was sitting on deck on the port side, gazing at the dim blue hills on the islands of Panay and Negros, when I noticed that the sky above them was glowing with all the colours of the sunset, and that wonderful beams of light were radiating from a dark

cloud behind which it seemed the sun must be hidden. And, with no thought of the points of the compass, I was settling down to enjoy the spectacle when George appeared beside my chair and exclaimed: "I say, there's a gorgeous sunset on the other side. Come over and have a look at it."

"Sunset?" I said. "Why, I'm looking at the sunset now."

"Don't be an ass," laughed George. "You're facing east!" And then, catching sight of the flaming sky and the beams of light he added: "Gosh! That's queer. It's exactly the same on the other side!"

And it was precisely as he said, for, by some extraordinary effect of mirage or reflection, the true sunset in the west was completely and exactly duplicated on the curtain of the eastern skies.

Very early next morning the roar and rattle of the plunging anchor-chain announced our arrival off the port of Zamboanga—capital of the Province of the same name which projects in a long curved peninsula from the western side of Mindanao Island—and, emerging on deck after breakfast, we looked down upon a flotilla of long, narrow dug-out canoes, each fitted with outriggers on both sides, and manned by brown-skinned and mother-naked diving-boys, who, upon our appearance, clamoured shrilly for coins to be thrown them. Of all methods of acquiring money I should imagine that diving for it is not only the most picturesque, but also one of the easiest, because the coin sinks very slowly in a series of long zig-zags and, in the brilliantly sunlit water, is visible at a great depth. Amongst the frail craft were two occupied by young girls who, clad in short white cotton tunics that clung closely to their slim brown figures, dived and struggled vigorously under water with the naked boys for possession of the coveted nickels.

From the steamer, Zamboanga, under the hot morning sun, showed as a cluster of white buildings and of leaf huts grouped beneath the scanty shade of slender coconut palms, and backed by hills covered with dense green vegeta-

tion. Although our call was only to be a brief one, we took a run ashore in the launch and strolled through the stifling streets—but we were so badgered by persistent girls trying to sell us tropical fruit and pieces of branching coral, that we very soon returned to the comparative peace and the cool spaciousness of the liner's decks.

Considerable areas of Mindanao, which is the second largest island in the group, are inhabited by the Moros—natives of Malayan extraction professing the Mohammedan religion—whose warlike characteristics and piratical habits offer a difficult problem in government to the Americans. The Filipinos themselves are terrified of them, and have every reason to be, because until quite recently they harried the whole archipelago from north to south, and the shores of even Luzon, in the extreme north, are still dotted with forts, built as a means of defence against their swift pirate craft. Their fanatical contempt of death is similar to that shown by Kipling's "fuzzy-wuzzies", and, as an illustration of this, no less an authority than Dean C. Worcester quotes the case of two Moros who, armed only with bamboo lances, attacked a column of two thousand soldiers armed with rifles. And, further, as an example of tenacity of purpose, it would be hard to beat the incident he witnessed, when a Moro, shot repeatedly through the body and with both legs broken, took his *kriss* between his teeth and proceeded to pull himself forward resolutely with his hands, in the hope of getting near enough to his enemies to strike one more blow for the Prophet. If ever the Americans withdraw from the Philippines, as they talk of doing, no doubt the Moros would very soon be at the throats of the Filipinos once more.

We sailed at twelve noon, and, passing almost immediately through the scattered and thickly wooded islands of the Sulu Archipelago, entered the Celebes Sea and settled down on our thirteen hundred mile run to Thursday Island.

There is something entirely satisfactory about a long, uninterrupted voyage. Detached from every obligation—social, financial, parental, public and private—you may

live, for the period of the voyage, a totally self-indulgent and self-satisfying existence. In other words, you may be thoroughly and completely selfish. I say, you *may* be, but, in actual fact, you become friendly with a crowd, and before you know it you find yourself three deep in appointments to play deck-golf, deck-tennis, superintend the Tote on the day's run, bathe, dance, play quoits, talk, have a drink, play bridge, pace the deck, attend a sports committee meeting, or help to organize a fancy-dress ball until, what with one thing and another, your day is full from morn till midnight.

It was too hot to be very energetic, and even the freshly pumped waters of the swimming-pool were so warm that it was exhausting to stay in too long, but George and I had plenty to do, for we were roped into the committee that was arranging the fancy-dress ball to be held on the next night but one—New Year's Eve. The Japanese make a great feature of their New Year festival, and the Captain eagerly offered us every assistance in his power to make the night a complete success.

There was a great deal of whispering and giggling amongst the ladies anent their costumes, and many furtive visits to each other's cabins with mysterious bundles of cotton and butter-muslin. The *Tango Maru*, ploughing steadily through the calm and lonely seas, became, in fact, such a hive of industry, that the easternmost tip of the island of Celebes, its distant mountains dim in the heat haze, was passed almost unnoticed during the day following our departure from Zamboanga, as was also the fact that, at midnight on the same day, we crossed the Equator, and so entered, without any fuss or ceremony, the Southern Hemisphere.



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THURSDAY ISLAND

s.s. *TANGO MARU*
Capt. M. Fujio, Commander

DINNER. NEW YEAR'S EVE.

HORS D'ŒUVRE.

Varies.

SOUP.

Consommé Canino. Potage Windsor.

FISH.

Boiled Suzuki. Oyster Sauce.

ENTRÉES.

Young Hare à la Flamande.

Noix de Veau Pique à la Jardiniers.

Chouxfleur au Gratin. Chicken Curry.

JOINTS.

Roast Sirloin of Beef. Horseradish.

Potatoes Boiled and Browned.

Sautéd Turnips.

POULTRY.

Roast Duck. Savoury Sauce.

Roast Goose. Apple Sauce.

Roast Turkey. Cranberry Sauce.

SWEETS.

Plum Pudding. Rum Sauce.

Pouding de Citron.

Strawberry Ice. Napolitaine Sandwiches.

Savoury. Cheese on Toast.

DESSERT.

Oranges. Grapes. Bananas.

Assorted Nuts. Dried Ginger.

Cheese. American and Australian.

Tea and Coffee.

COLD BUFFET.

Roast Mutton. Corned Ox-Tongue.

Yes, I think, so far as the kitchen department of the *Tango Maru* was concerned, that the New Year's Eve celebrations were given a good send-off. But for most of us the good fare was not half so important as the intermittent entrance into the dining-saloon of each passenger in his or her fancy dress. The two Misses Coke had been especially mysterious about their respective costumes, and only George, who was a great favourite with both of them, had been admitted to their confidence.

I have never met anyone who talked as did either or both of these two good ladies. Having successfully trapped an unfortunate male, they would place themselves one on each side of him, and, leaning forward eagerly and sitting on the extreme edges of their chairs, they would launch into an interminable torrent of words. The moment one stopped for breath, the other would take up the tale. They seemed to take it for granted that one was interested in every branch of their family tree—apparently a giant of the forest.

" . . . you see, my mother, she was the eldest of thirteen died when I was *quite* young and of course poor Uncle Harry, he was the youngest—*wasn't* he good-looking Fanny, he took us to live with him at Mountjoy Place. . . ."

"Carrington Road, Virginia."

" . . . Yes, Fanny, I forgot—Carrington Road *first*—yes, he was the youngest of the family and my Aunt Emily you know she lost her only daughter when she was seventeen—I mean the daughter was seventeen of course such a *lovely* girl she died the month before the Duke of Clarence or was it the month after Fanny—well never mind such a *blow* poor Aunt Emily well she was really my Uncle Richard's *second* wife. . . ."

And so on and so on—a form of verbal hæmorrhage.

George was the favourite victim of these two breathless virgins, and for this reason, presumably, was admitted into their confidence with respect to their costumes. He refused to tell me anything, but from his frequent chuckles I guessed that something very good was in the wind.

We both had fancy dresses with us, as it happened—George's was that of a Toreador, whilst mine, less inspired, was a Pierrot rig-out—and I took my place in good time in the saloon to witness the entrance of the others.

One by one, very self-consciously and greeted with acclamation and loud cat-calls by the assembled diners, the passengers descended the shallow steps, red-carpeted, of the wide staircase—a Chinese Mandarin, a Pirate, a Pierrot, a massive woman with billiard-table legs attired as a Columbine, a Pierrette, a very tall man shrouded in a sheet, with whitened face and two empty gin-bottles hanging round his neck—"The Long-Departed Spirit" this; an enterprising lady clad in the Captain's uniform; another Pierrot, dammit; Miss Ritchie in a *yashmak* and Turkish trimmings; George in his Toreador get-up, carrying a toy cow on wheels under his arm; Nathan, shamelessly painted and powdered, and looking very coy in a black lace dress with white silk stockings and a picture hat; an Australian swag-man, complete with bundle and billy-can; Norton as a Sudanese, in a tarboosh and khaki shorts; and two more Pierrots.

One of the greatest successes of the evening was the entrance of the Bishop, who, disdaining frivolity, came pacing slowly down the stairs clad in his usual priestly trappings. When he first appeared at the top of the staircase there was a rather uncomfortable silence, but by the time he was half-way down, someone remembered that this was a fancy-dress ball, and began to applaud the ingenious costume of the descending figure. The same idea seemed to flash into the minds of everyone simultaneously, for there arose a storm of ironic hand-clapping, during which the Bishop, with a flush on his sallow cheeks and looking more satanic than ever, stalked to his table.

But his reception was as nothing to that accorded to the next two arrivals. It was not difficult to recognize one of the ladies as the elder Miss Coke, even tricked out as she was in the gorgeous finery of a Japanese *geisha*, and, for the moment, the fact that her *obi* was put on wrong way round, with the bow in front, was not noticed. But

the identity of her companion puzzled us all. Surely it could not be our Miss Fanny—she wouldn't dare! For the costume itself, what there was of it, consisted merely of a sleeveless shirt and very short pants of cotton carrying broad red stripes, and the considerable portions of the lady's anatomy that protruded in all directions from these scanty garments were stained a coal-black hue. Sambo in the very much flesh! Our little Miss Coke! It was certainly an astounding spectacle and set one thinking of sex-repressions and complexes and all the rest of the Freudian mumbo-jumbo.

But there was no doubt about it; it was indeed our own little Miss Fanny, and when we realized the truth, such a shout of delight and approbation went up that the broad grins and doubled-up thigh-slappings of the Japanese stewards passed almost unnoticed. For, as simpering and laughing delightedly, the pair descended the stairs, I realized that, by reason of the reversed *obi*, the elder Miss Coke was, quite unwittingly, even more daring than her sister, inasmuch as her costume was neither more nor less than that of a Japanese courtesan. I cocked my eye sideways at George, and he nodded, guiltily. It was really too bad of him, but perhaps a clue to his reprehensible conduct lay in his whispered remark: "I wonder what Aunt Emily and Uncle Harry and old Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all would say if they knew!"

It was a very gay dinner, and nobody cared when a lot of Fanny's black make-up transferred itself to her neighbours' sleeves and to the tablecloth, nor when the Australian bushranger, who had tarried long in the cocktail bar before dinner, insisted on living up to his costume and eating his dinner, seated cross-legged on the floor, in one corner of the dining-saloon. His one lament, oft-repeated, was that he was not allowed to light a fire on the carpet, wherewith to boil tea in his billy.

The rest of the night was spent in song and dance, and at midnight the birth of the New Year was greeted in the traditional English way by joining hands and singing a Scotch song—against a background of ferocious yells and

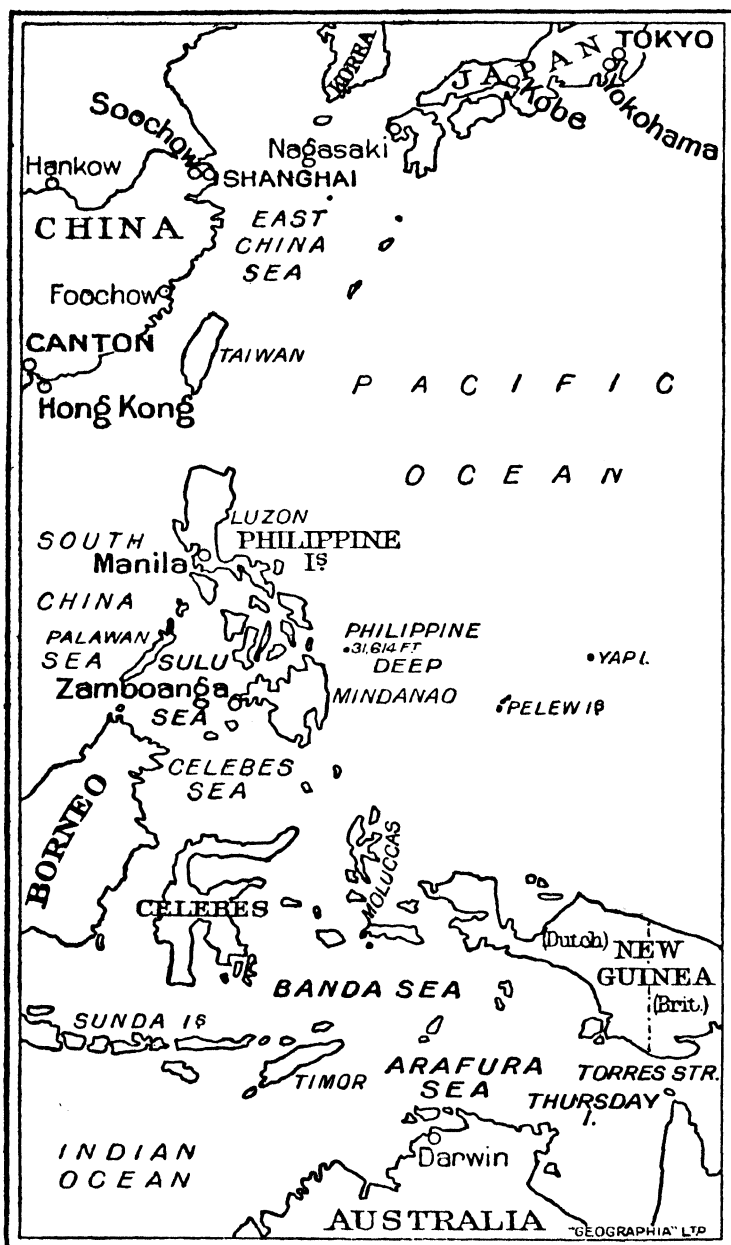
the furious banging of every gong and metal utensil in the ship by the Japanese crew. An inferno of glittering lights and tinny uproar, the *Tango Maru* moved steadily forward beneath the unchanging stars.

In so far as the Japanese officers and crew were concerned the New Year festival proper was celebrated on the next and subsequent days, and, in consequence, the cabin and dining-room service was more or less disorganized until we reached Thursday Island. Not that we suffered the slightest inconvenience, but for a day or two the little Japanese stewards did not, as they usually did, pop up like jack-in-the-boxes at the instant that we clapped our hands.

We were now in the Banda Sea, and on the afternoon of January the first the Captain took us a little out of our course in order to pass close to a solitary island which rose, a perfect volcanic cone, from a sea of ultramarine blue. I think its real name was Manuk, but he called it Bird Island, and, to show us why, he pulled the string of the ship's siren as we glided by. As the full-throated bellow rolled across the sea, the whole surface of the island seemed to peel off and rise in a whirling cloud into the air, until the very sky was darkened by the myriads of beating wings. Small as the island is, it furnishes an asylum for millions of birds of all kinds, and so dense are they that the various species economise space by building their nests one above the other in tiers like flat-dwellers in a lofty apartment house. It was long afterwards, and not until the island had dwindled to a small grey pudding basin behind us, that the whirling cloud of birds began to contract and to settle once more on their lonely sanctuary.

Deck-golf, quoits, eating, dozing and soaking in the swimming-bath, thus we passed the hours as the *Tango Maru* drove stedfastly across the mill-pond sea beneath brazen skies and towards a horizon piled with the fleecy cumulus Trade-clouds, white and billowing, of the tropics.

Word had come by wireless to George and myself that no connection was possible at the moment between Thursday Island and Port Moresby, and, in consequence,



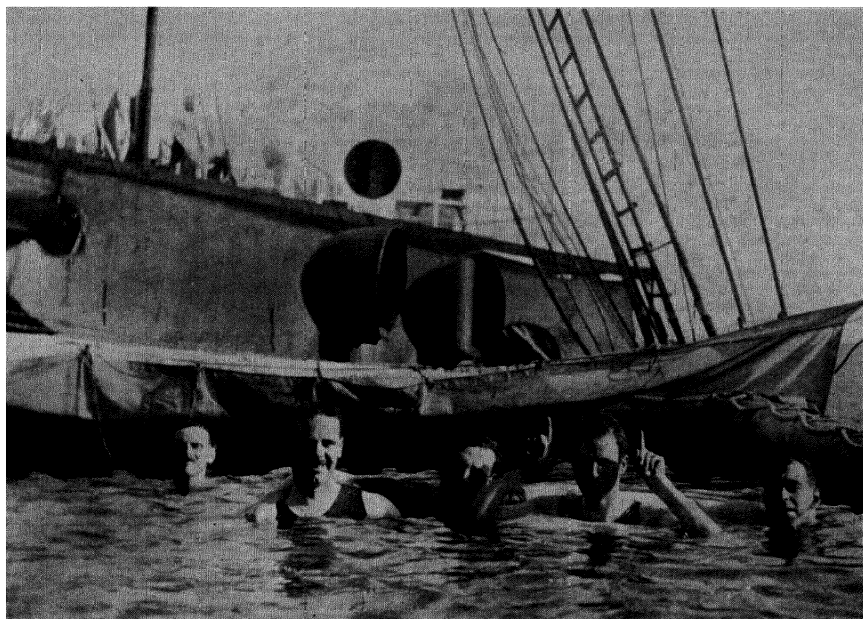
we decided to pay the extra £15 each and travel on to Sydney, where all the steamer lanes from the South Pacific Islands converge.

The whole of Saturday was occupied in crossing the Arafura Sea—a vast expanse of water that lay unruffled like a sheet of milky-white glass, merging on an invisible horizon into a sky of luminous pearl—but somewhere in the small hours of Sunday morning the rhythmic beat of the engines slowed and ceased, and the clattering roar of the anchor-chain that followed announced our arrival off Thursday Island. Thereafter an uncanny silence fell upon the ship—to me a silence pregnant with a vague suspense and completely destructive of sleep. I slipped out of my bunk, and, moving silently along the lighted and antiseptic-looking corridor, past the rows of cabin doors from behind whose still curtains came the hum of air-fans, I emerged upon the long emptiness of the darkened deck.

The close heat of the tropic night was unstirred by any breeze. On the port side, all black and silver in the moonlight, lay a long, low hummock of land, dark, save for a lonely twinkle of yellow light from a house near the water's edge. The swift tide sobbed and chuckled as it raced along the sheer black wall of the vessel's side, racing onwards to set a-swaying under the moon the bare poles of scores of pearling luggers lying at anchor all about us on the glittering black water.

So this was Thursday Island! The meeting-place of black-browed desperados and the hell's kitchen where gathered all the flotsam and jetsam of the Seven Seas. What desperate villainy was even now being hatched within those huts and shacks whose roofs the moonbeams faintly revealed? That hoard of milk-white pearls hidden beneath the loose board in the flooring! Perhaps at this very moment the claw-like fingers of the despoiler were curving like steel hooks above the throat of the sleeper!

"A funny name, Thursday Island, isn't it, Mr. Colly? I wonder if there's a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Island? Tee-hee! I wouldn't like to live on *Friday* Island, would you? Such a *very* unlucky day, isn't it?



"It is not possible to maintain an icy reserve. . . ."

(see page 260)



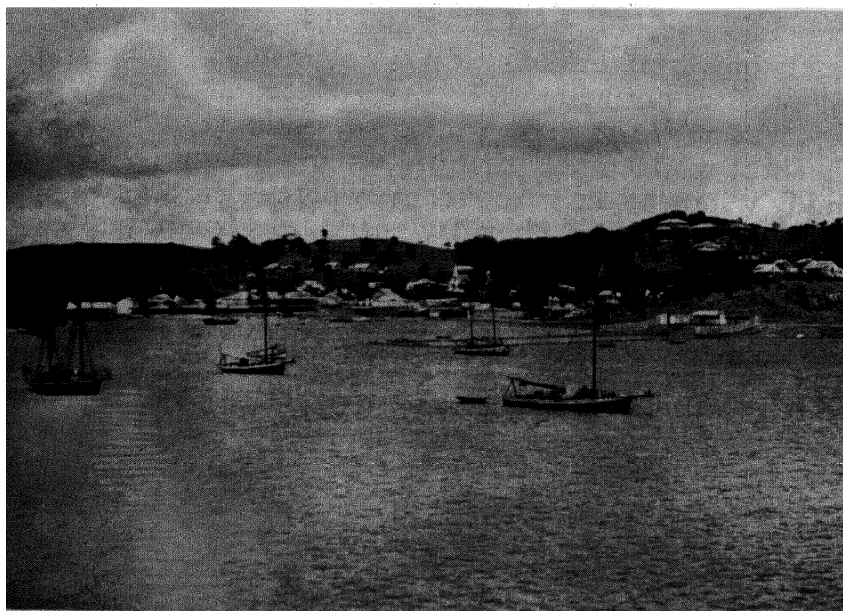
"... Moros—natives of Malayan extraction."

(see page 262)



" . . . a very tall man, shrouded in a sheet. . . ."

(see page 266)



"Thursday Island—a low-lying mass of land."

(see page 271)

Poor Uncle Harry died on a Friday ; such a *dear* man and *so* distinguished-looking. My sister Virginia and I *always* go out to eat on a Friday—we simply cannot *bear* to cook anything on the day poor Uncle Harry died, and there's *such* a nice little café just round the corner—it belongs to a Mrs. Bellows—such a *nice*—oh, are you going to turn in again Mr. Colly ?”

“Yes, Miss Coke,” I said, “if you will excuse me. I feel rather chilly,” and, thoughtlessly mopping my beaded forehead, I fled.

As a matter of fact, there is a Wednesday Island and also a Friday Island in the Torres Straits archipelago, but Thursday Island, although by no means the largest, is the most important. It is not only a coaling station for ocean-going steamers, but also the head centre of the pearl-shelling industry, the seat of Government and a military post whose powerful forts dominate the narrow straits through which steamers pass between Australia and Asia.

Morning revealed Thursday Island as a low-lying mass of land with a sandy-looking surface sparsely covered with scrub and a scattering of trees and palms. The township, already quivering in the heat haze, consisted of a few large white houses on the hillsides, and a collection of tin-roofed go-downs and shanties down below, grouped on each side of a short wooden jetty that projected a little way into the muddy waters of the harbour. Nowhere is the sea so thick and muddy as it is at Thursday Island, this condition being due to the inflow of mainland streams and the presence of weeds and slime in the shallow waters of the fairway.

The spruce and white-clad doctor came aboard at eight a.m., and our health being pronounced satisfactory, the *Tango Maru* was permitted to up-anchor and move forward to a position alongside the little jetty.

After breakfast and a somewhat vexatious delay over passport inspection, a party of us clambered down the lowered gangway, and walked along the hot planking of the little pier into the town. It was viciously hot—so much so that it actually called for a definite physical effort to venture forth into the direct sunlight from beneath what

chance shade there happened to be. The townlet was composed, for the most part, of one extraordinarily wide street lined on both sides with rather mean little wooden shops, each, however, with its welcome awning supported above the dusty and unpaved footpath on wooden poles. Every shop in the place seemed to be owned by a Japanese or a Chinaman, and the wares they displayed were not calculated to attract the custom of the casual tourist. Of far more interest than the shops were the people we met on the side-walks—as mixed a company as one could wish to find—stocky little Japanese, probably lugger-captains or expert pearl-divers; South Sea islanders, brown-skinned and fuzzy-haired, wearing filthy cotton trousers and vests or, more attractively, a brightly coloured cotton waist-cloth; Torres Straits islanders, very tall and handsome, with regular, well-formed features; Papuans, with skins like polished ebony and with enormous mops of frizzed-out hair; coffee-brown Malays, Filipinos, and last, but by no means least, quite a number of Australian aborigines from the mainland. Coal-black in colour, hairy and with simian features, these lone survivors of the original inhabitants of Australia rank very low in the scale of humanity.

In search of high adventure and hoping to meet with some of the wild and woolly island cut-throats, George and I gave the rest of the party the slip and prowled around on our own for a while.

Finding nothing more exciting than a dog-fight down one of the side streets, as a last resource we made for the bar of the local hotel. Here, surely, we should find some real local colour, and the sound of raised voices together with the high cackle of a woman's laughter that greeted us as we approached raised our expectations to fever heat. We must take care not to become embroiled, of course, because the steamer was due to sail in about two hours' time.

"I'll go first," said George.

"All right," I replied, "but remember, no fighting if we can help it!"

"Right!" said George, and, settling his bow tie and squaring his shoulders, he pressed against the swing-door.

At the very first creak of the hinges, all conversation within the room ceased abruptly, and there ensued a silence that could be felt. George stopped dead in his tracks, half in and half out of the door, and, as his glance slowly travelled round the room, I noticed that his hand, which was resting on the doorpost, clenched until the knuckles showed white through the tanned skin. What was it? What could it be? Peep and peer as I might I was unable to see a thing, because George's six foot three of brawn and muscle blocked the whole of the doorway. That the scene on which he gazed was something monstrous and totally unexpected was certain, for George's nerves are like steel.

Not knowing what else to do, I plucked nervously at his coat-tails as a suggestion that we should withdraw, but alas, it was too late, for at that precise moment a babel of sound broke forth within the room, and one voice rose clear above them all.

"Naughty! naughty!!" cried Miss Coke. "Now what have you been up to? Come here, you *naughty* man, and tell me where you've been!"

Gosh!

All the ship's passengers seemed to be gathered in that bar, but there were two or three inhabitants of the island there also, and with one of them, a Government official named Bowden, I fell into conversation.

It was his business to make frequent trips of inspection to all the various inhabited islands and islets in the Torres Straits, and he had just returned from one named Moa, or Banks Island, which, sixty square miles in area, lay some thirty miles away. With the exception of one white missionary and his family, Moa is inhabited entirely by Torres Straits islanders, who run their own little government. Authority rests in the hands of three native councillors, who wear, as a mark of their high estate, a red sweater with the word "Councillor" across the breast, and a cap with a red band. The position carries with it certain

privileges. For instance, everyone on the island must be in bed by nine o'clock with all lights out—and the Councillors enforce the curfew, with the natural result that all three of them are out and about much later than anyone else. On the neighbouring island of Badu there is but one horse, which used to be the property of a Councillor and another native. Joint ownership did not work well, but the unofficial native would not sell his share. Finally, however, he committed some offence, and was brought before the Councillors—who promptly fined him half a horse!

The verger of the Church of England tabernacle on the island is armed with a fifteen foot bamboo rod of office, and anyone who snores, wriggles his toes, talks, or otherwise disturbs the service, gets the point of it in his ribs. When the bishop of the diocese visited the island, he caused a silver ferrule to be placed upon the rod, and of this the verger was inordinately proud. But alas, at the first service during which this newly decorated rod was displayed, no one misbehaved at all, and the lynx-eyed verger, peer he never so closely, could find no slightest excuse for using it. He stood it until almost the end of the service, and then, bursting with exasperation and determined to show off the rod somehow, he gave his perfectly well-behaved and unsuspecting wife a tremendous swipe over the head with it.

According to Bowden, the pearl-fishing industry—that is the gem-pearls as distinct from pearl-shell—has fallen upon evil days, and the hundreds of small schooners once engaged in the trade have dwindled to a few score. The first rush for Torres Straits pearls set in some forty years ago, and adventurers from all over the world came to rake the bottom of the shallow sea for its treasure. Driven by the lure of wealth and utterly unscrupulous, they made slaves of the islanders and kept them so constantly at diving work that many of them died and even more became paralysed. The Queensland Government stepped in, however, and, by the introduction of protective measures, changed the conditions of work entirely.

At the present time the pearling industry is mostly in the hands of the Japanese. The schooners, captained by a Japanese who is also the expert diver, go off for trips lasting as long as three months, fresh provisions being brought to them from time to time. From about December to April the craft lie in or about the harbour, being overhauled, which fact accounted for the presence of so many at anchor at the time of our visit.

In addition to pearls, Thursday Island is the basis of operations for sandal-wood getters, trepangers—a trepang being a kind of sea-slug which is dried and smoked and highly esteemed in China for the making of soup—and traders in trochas pearl-shell.

If I had known that within the next six months I, myself, was to become a dealer in trochas pearl, I should certainly have taken a good deal more interest in them on Thursday Island than I did.

The trochas shell is conical in shape and measures about four inches across the base—rather like a limpet, but on a much larger scale. The inside of it is solid mother-o'-pearl and the outside is striped with red and green markings. From it are made the pearl buttons of commerce, and if one takes the trouble to look at the back of almost any shirt, blouse or pyjama pearl button, traces of the red and green markings of the original trochas shell will probably be seen.



CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

WE REACH SYDNEY

WE sailed half an hour after noon, and, threading our way through an archipelago of rocky and barren islets—apparently composed of granite—passed through Alconbury Pass, a narrow strip of blue water racing and swirling in a strong tide-rip between low hills dotted with ant-heaps. Some of these pinnacles, raised by the termite, or white ant, were at least fifteen feet high, and at a later date I had opportunities of examining more closely the habits of the insects that made them. I remember on one occasion that a bullet-hole, nine inches deep and three-quarters of an inch in diameter, was filled with fresh clay by these ants overnight, and when I cleaned it out again in the morning, they made good the damage in exactly two hours and five minutes. Most of the working ants measured about an eighth of an inch in length and were straw-coloured, with tiny dark brown heads, but one ant, who acted as clay-bearer, was at least four times as large. Each colony consists of several distinct castes, such as workers, soldiers, nurses, kings and queens, and all are wingless except the kings and queens, who, however, shed their wings after the nuptial flight.

Our course now lay slightly east of due south, and the coast of Queensland—mountainous and barren-looking, strewn with great rocks and with numerous beaches of white sand lying hot and dazzling under the blazing sun—streamed past within a short distance of our starboard side. Between ourselves and the open Pacific lay the Great

Barrier Reef, that wonderful breakwater of coral, twelve hundred miles in length, which, in places submerged, but mostly appearing as a low-lying reef awash in the sea-foam, runs parallel with the Queensland coast-line at a distance varying between ten and thirty miles.

I had been asking Bowden some questions about coral islands, and he told me that coral cannot grow in water possessing a temperature of less than 70°F., and this fact limits the area where it is found to a belt extending not more than 30° north and south of the Equator. Moreover, said Bowden, so far as he knew, no coral was ever found on the *western* margins of any continent for the reason that, in the Trade Winds Belt, the winds blow towards the shore on the eastern coast, and off the shore on the western, so that the warm surface waters are piled up on the east coasts, and, conversely, blown away out to sea from the west. Once I happened to speak of "coral insects", and thereby drew down upon myself Bowden's scorn. According to him, the animal that makes coral is a polyp—a pulpy organism something like a sea anemone in appearance.

In the middle of the afternoon on the day following, after a 620 mile run from Thursday Island, the *Tango Maru* turned in to Townsville, a fair-sized town lying on the banks of a river, with abrupt hills and rocky projections rising behind it. Opposite Townsville—and indeed opposite many other seaports down the coast—there is a deep water passage across the Great Barrier Reef, for the reason that the coral polyp cannot build in fresh water, nor where sediment is brought down to the sea by means of a river.

We pulled in to a low wharf some distance down river from the town itself, and, in spite of having already "entered Australia" at Thursday Island, were subjected to a further passport examination. During subsequent years I became inured to the ill-mannered and autocratic behaviour of Australian passport and Customs officers, but this was my first real experience of their American "cop" methods. All passengers, first- and second-class alike, were herded

into the lounge, and our passports were collected from us. Soldiers guarded the exits and no one was allowed to leave the place, even though his passport had been examined and returned to him. In the absence of breeze caused by the ship's movement, the packed hall soon became a perfect inferno, and several of the women were greatly distressed. All protests and requests were met with a surly refusal, and, when the last passport had been examined and returned, it was a company boiling mentally as well as physically that finally staggered out into the fresh air at the end of nearly an hour and a half's sweltering confinement.

However, we eventually scrambled down the steeply sloping gang-plank and, engaging a car, drove to the town along a very dusty road. Darkness had fallen and lights twinkled on the black surface of the river as we crossed the bridge and entered Townsville proper, whose one main street, with its brightly lit shop windows, presented quite a gay and attractive appearance.

Wandering around, we came to a movie theatre, and, for want of anything better to do, we entered—although the prospect of being cooped up in a stuffy hall after our recent Black-Hole-of-Calcutta experience was not very alluring. Imagine my delight therefore when we passed through the pay-box into a large walled enclosure, set about with canvas deck-chairs and open across its whole length and width to the starlit sky. An orchestra was playing, small tables stood about, and we enjoyed the shadow-show to the accompaniment of coffee served to us by trim little waitresses. I recommend the idea to the entertainment managers of our South Coast towns.

At ten o'clock we put to sea again, our next and final objective being Sydney, twelve hundred miles to the South.

For four days the sunlit continent, so close on our star-board beam, streamed past us—sandy hillocks inland, covered with brown and sun-scorched scrub, and a rock-bound coast on which the long surges of the Pacific fretted and foamed.

And now into the minds and consciousness of the little group of us who had been drawn so closely together in the friendly intimacy of ship-board life there began to creep a feeling of change and of unrest, as the realization forced itself upon us that the end of the voyage was drawing near. We played deck-golf and tennis as usual, and pretended that everything was just the same—but it wasn't. There was a feeling of bleakness and derangement about everything; each one of us was literally coming back to earth, with all its personal obligations and problems. I found George sitting on the cabin settee with his head in his hands.

"What's the matter, old lad?" I exclaimed. He waved his hand at the cheerful disarray.

"All this," he said, "We've got to pack it all up again, and I don't want to. I tell you I don't want to, dammit!"

On the last afternoon, a yell from George took me over to the port side and, looking where his finger pointed, I perceived, half a mile away across the blue sea, a flurry of foam. And even as I watched, an enormous black form, arched tensely in the shape of a bow, shot from the surface of the water, hung for a moment poised and glistening in the sun, and then crashed down again, to send fountains of white spray flying in every direction. It was a hump-back whale being attacked by several killer-whales, and its futile efforts to escape from its foes were pitiful to witness. Again and again it appeared, now rolling over with its great paddle-shaped fins threshing like flails, and anon leaping clear into the air, carrying with it the sinister shapes of its attackers fastened like leeches to its vast sides. Long after we had passed, the hopeless struggle continued, a churning smother of white foam on the blue sea.

At six o'clock on the morning of the sixteenth day after leaving Manila, we anchored inside the Heads of Sydney harbour in the quarantine area, and remained there for some little time whilst the doctor went through the usual formalities.

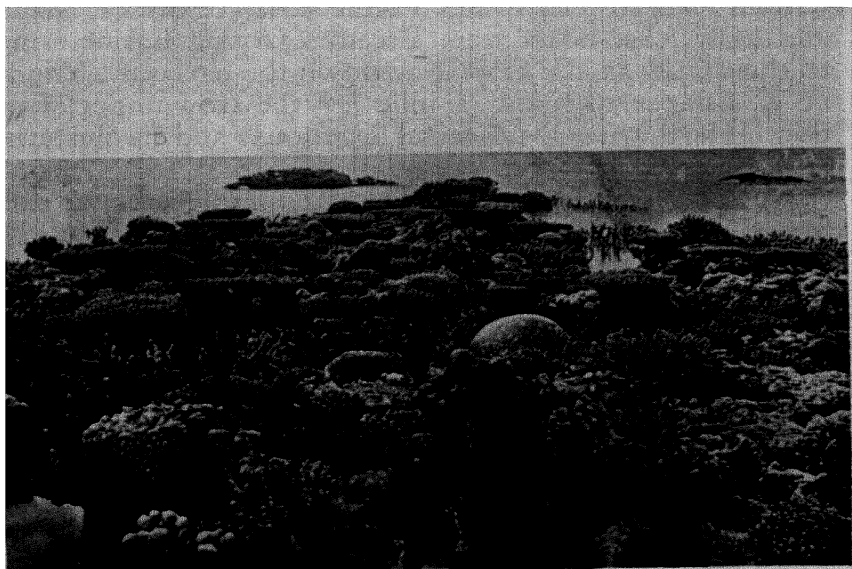
Just on the other side of the narrow promontory of the North Head, off whose inner side we floated, lay the

famous bathing-beach and Pacific coast resort of Manly, and early ferry-boats were already carrying business men to their work in the City away down the harbour. Yonder at a distance of about a mile lay the frowning cliffs of South Head, with its powerful lighthouse and its clustering dwellings.

A certain place on South Head, offering a sheer drop to the rock-strewn shore hundreds of feet below, exercises such a sinister fascination on those unfortunates who are tired of life that it has come to be called "Suicide Gap". Seldom a month passes but what some unhappy wight climbs the railings and dashes himself to destruction below. And it is related that on one occasion a passer-by, seeing a man in the very act of mounting the barrier, rushed forward and pulled him back. "Surely," exclaimed the rescuer, "surely things cannot be so utterly hopeless! Come, my friend, let us sit down and you shall tell me all your troubles."

They sat down—and half an hour later they *both* went over the railings together.

After passing the doctor we moved up the glittering waters of the harbour to the N.Y.K. wharf. There are many beautiful harbours, but none to equal that of Sydney under the hot sunlight of a January morning. As you enter between the mile-wide deep-water passage between the North and South Heads, Port Jackson, with its innumerable bays and coves and inlets, opens out before you like a brightly coloured fan. Red-roofed houses, set amidst the greenery of the wooded slopes, crowd the shores and over the blue waters skim the butterfly sails of scores of tiny yachts. Liners and merchant vessels swing at anchor on its spacious surface, whilst double-ended ferry-boats, crowded with passengers, skitter away from Circular Quay, like water-beetles, in every direction. It is, I believe, the most wonderful ferry service in the world. Every five minutes one of these speedy little vessels, with a propeller pushing at the stern and another pulling her forward at the bows, comes scooting out from Circular Quay and skims down the harbour bound for Watson's Bay or Manly or



THE GREAT BARRIER REEF.

" . . . the Great Barrier Reef, that wonderful coral breakwater. . . ."

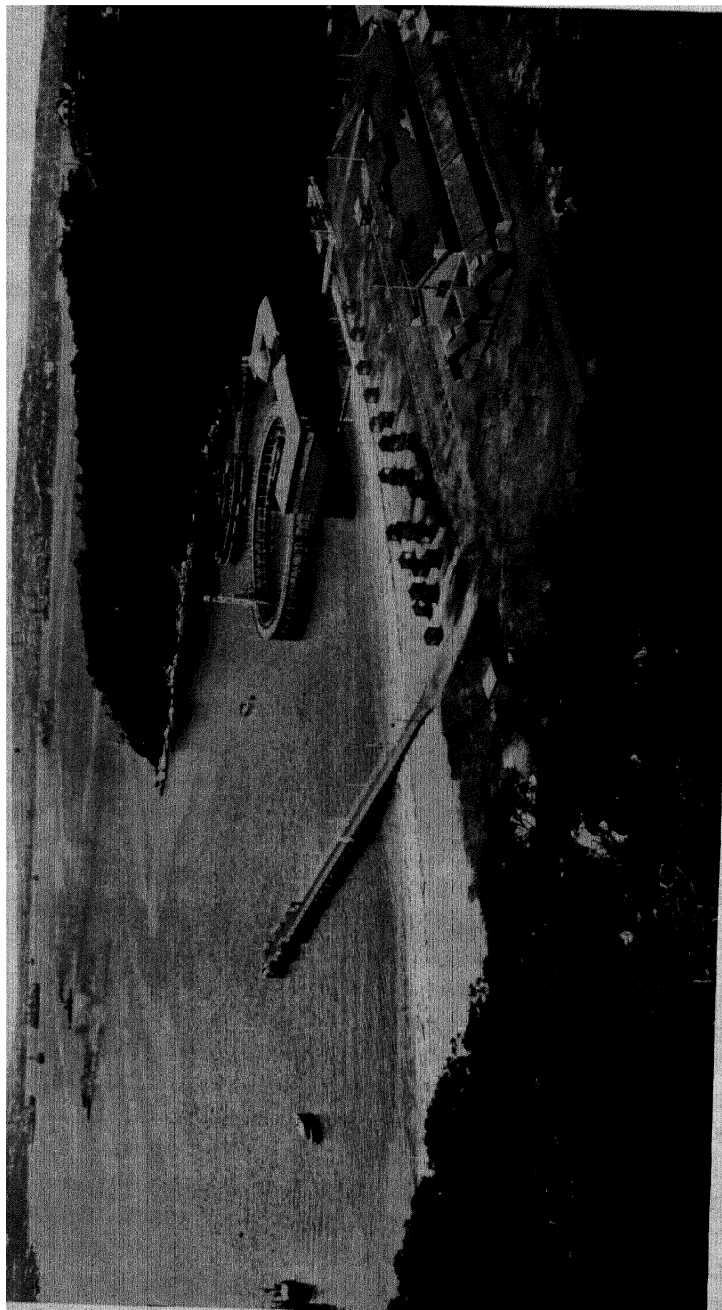
(see page 277)



SYDNEY, N.S.W.

" . . . the beaches were crowded with bathers."

(see page 282)



SYDNEY, N.S.W.

"Clifton Gardens, one of Sydney's marine suburban stations."

(see page 281)

North Shore or Neutral Bay or Clifton Gardens—any one of the dozens of little piers which are Sydney's marine suburban stations.

On board a metamorphosis had taken place for, in place of the muslin-frocked and flannelled figures of the day before, perfect strangers emerged and stood about self-consciously in coats, skirts and bonnets, lounge suits and hard, billy-cock hats. Just as, during the War, mufti so often revealed what the uniform temporarily camouflaged, so, on the last day of a voyage, when flannels and tennis-shirts are put aside, workaday garb provides many disillusioning surprises.

Reporters came aboard at the Quarantine Station and made a bee-line for George, whose noble ancestry rendered him peculiarly competent, of course, to answer once and for all that inevitable question fired at every newcomer to Sydney: "And what do you think of our 'arbour?" George answered absent-mindedly that as 'arbours went it was quite a good show, but that he thought the policemen were simply marvellous. The Society reporters of the Australian newspapers are so hard up for copy that the arrival of anyone with a prefix to their name is a godsend and an occasion for interviews—in many cases much to the surprise and embarrassment of the interviewed.

The Misses Coke, with bright and beady eyes cocked at George, announced that they were going to stay at the Australia Hotel, and we therefore told our taxi driver to take us to Petty's, about a mile away. Petty's was full up, but George was so persistent that when Mr. Murdoch offered to rig up two beds for us in an alcove to the drawing-room, we gladly agreed.

And here we remained happily enough for the space of a week, most of our time being spent on the bathing-beaches. There are quite a dozen of them scattered up and down the Pacific coast north and south of the Heads, and, according to the beach you select, you can have any kind of bathing you fancy. At Manly beach, for instance, we perfected ourselves in the surf-board riding to which we had been introduced at Waikiki, for the sea is shallow for

quite a long way out. But at Coogee the beach shelves steeply and the huge swells come rolling in unbroken from the open Pacific, and it isn't until they nearly reach the shore itself that they suddenly rear up and crash over in a smother of foam and spray—great fellows fifteen feet high.

There are sharks too. The worst are the variety known as the "Grey Nurse"—which is a very misleading name for an extremely savage and ferocious creature. They sometimes venture in quite close to the beach, and have actually been known to attack children in the shallows. But on every beach there is a Life Saving Association and a building with a watch-tower, and as soon as the watchman spots the sinister dorsal fin of a shark sheering through the water, he rings a big bell and all the bathers come scrambling to the shore like the oysters in *Alive Through the Looking-Glass*.

It was tremendously hot and the beaches were crowded with bathers tanned to a dark mahogany brown. And it can be hot in Sydney. Later, when I was living in the Solomons, I came down from the Islands one Christmas, and brought along with me one of my little native house-boys. His name was Sai, and he was just twelve years old. The thermometer stood at 109°, and a hot wind was blowing that seemed to burn the lungs with every breath. But even so, one would have imagined that Sai, being a South Sea Islander, was not likely to feel any discomfort. Sydney's heat bowled him over, however. He lay flat on his bare back on the verandah of my flat—the Australians would not allow him in an hotel on account of their "White Australia" policy!—and gasped out: "My gracious! Master, this fella sunshine b'long Sydney he hot *too* much! More better we two-fella go back quick-time along Solomons, where wind he no all-same hell-fire."

.

So far as our future plans were concerned, it was our intention to spend a further week or two in Sydney, and then, reverting to our previous objective, to fare forth again on our travels and proceed to Port Moresby

in New Guinea. Indeed, already we had begun to make tentative enquiries to this end at Burns Philp's Shipping Offices in Bridge Street.

But alas for man's proposals!

Exactly one week after reaching Sydney, George received a cable, recalling him at once to England on urgent private affairs.

It meant, of course, the complete collapse of all our plans—and an immediate decision on my part as to whether I, too, should drop everything and return with him. I decided to do so.

At this critical juncture, however, a fellow-guest at Petty's, with whom we had struck up a friendship—a man named Nicholson, who was a District Officer in the British Solomon Islands—hearing of the totally unexpected break-up of our schemes, came forward with a most surprising suggestion. In short, he was kind enough to offer to put me up for a month or two as his guest in the Solomons, if I cared to accompany him on his imminent return to those notorious Cannibal Islands of the South Seas. Hospitality is like that in the Dominions—casual and alarmingly sudden.

Being somewhat taken aback, I gave him a noncommittal answer and hastened to discuss the matter with George. The fact was, that any desire I felt to accept Nicholson's invitation was altogether outweighed by my dismay at the prospect of parting company with my pal. But he—actuated, as I like to think, by purely unselfish motives—urged me to accept the offer, pointing out with some truth that an opportunity of visiting the South Sea Islands and viewing cannibals under such august patronage was much too good to miss.

Still feeling more than half reluctant—for I simply hated the thought of parting from old George—I sought out Nicholson.

"When are you due to sail?" I asked.

"To-morrow," he replied. "To-morrow at twelve noon."

"Oh!" I said.

.

Prompt at twelve noon on the following day the ropes were cast off and the old *Mindini*, with her limited deck-space cluttered up with galvanized iron tanks, moved slowly out from the wharf, where stood good old George, beaming through his eye-glass, and waving me a long farewell.

.

And so, edging her way through the mussel-encrusted pylons of the swing-bridge, the *Mindini* pushed her laborious way down Sydney harbour and, passing through the Heads, turned her weather-bitten old nose northwards, bearing me towards the Equator once more, and to the Solomons.

And of what befell me in those surprising islands I have already written.

FINIS

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